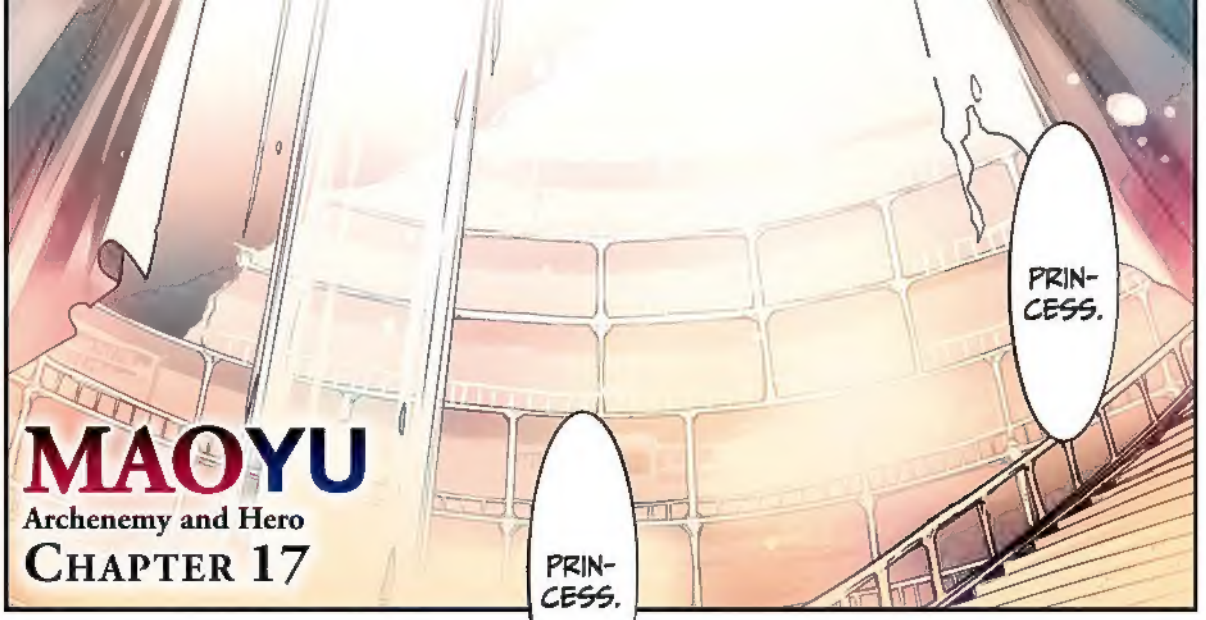
Art by
AKIRA ISHIDA

Original Work by
MAMARE TOUNO

Character Design by KEINOJOU MIZUTAMA and toi8



MAOYU

Archenemy and Hero

CHAPTER 17

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MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
"Become mine, Hero" "I refuse!"

Archenemy and Hero **CHAPTER 17**

This is a War of Foolish Humans

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MAOYU
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"Become mine, Hero"
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Archenemy and Hero CHAPTER 17
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MAOYU

VOLUME 5

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CHAPTER 17 Archenemy and Hero 001
This is a War of Foolish Humans

CHAPTER 18 Archenemy and Hero 063
I Need You, Hero

CHAPTER 19 Archenemy and Hero 113
Because I am a Merchant

MAOYU

Archenemy and Hero

"Become mine, Hero" "I refuse!"

Volume 5

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COLUMN PAGE
Daisuke Takenouchi, Shouhei Ouno (Recca-sha)
Masataka Nomura

THANKS TO THE POTATOES, THE MAXIMUM POPULATION WE CAN SUPPORT HAS DOUBLED.
I BELIEVE WE CAN CHANGE COURSE WITHOUT TOO MUCH TROUBLE.

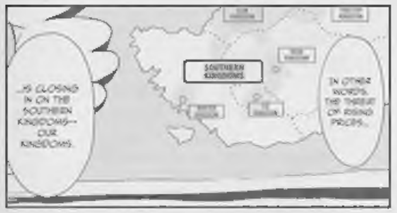
Kingdom Trade Alliance and break away from the Central Continent, and they even release their serfs and declare the Lakeside Convent the national religion. Additionally, using movable type and traveling minstrels, they draw people to the south from the Central Continent, and the Southern Kingdoms grow in power.

The Young Merchant leading the Alliance recognizes the conflict between the Southern Kingdoms and Central Continent as well

THE LAKESIDE CONVENT RECOGNIZES THE CRIMSON SCHOLAR AS A SAINT.
THE WINTER KINGDOM FORMALLY OFFERS ITS PROTECTION TO THE CRIMSON SCHOLAR.

as the elements composing it and begins to act by buying up all the wheat. As a result, the price of wheat in the Central Continent begins rising rapidly, and the lives of the common folk become destitute. Additionally, while the effects were starting to spread to the Southern Kingdoms, they are able to avoid further problems by imposing customs duties at the Merchant's Son's suggestion.

Meanwhile, the demon Princess Fire Dragon paid a visit to the Young Merchant...



In order to truly end the long war between humans and demons, the Demon Queen and Hero begin working together. The Demon Queen establishes her base of operations in Overwinter Village, and under the name the Crimson Scholar, she trains people to spread new knowledge and technology, including potatoes, four field cop rotations, and compasses.

...BUT AT THE SAME TIME, HER OWN SOUL BECOMES TAINTED.
THE DEMON QUEEN INHERITS THEIR WISDOM AND POWER TO ACHIEVE THE GREATEST STRENGTH...
THE SOULS OF ALL THE PREVIOUS DEMON KINGS AND QUEENS ARE SEALED INSIDE THE PALACE OF THE UNDERWORLD.

The Demon's knowledge and technology later permeates the Southern Kingdoms, and the people's lives improve. With the success of the Second Landing Operation to Recover Aurora Island, the light of freedom begins to shine on the Southern Kingdoms, which have been dependent on the Central Continent until now.

CENTRAL CHURCH OF THE LIGHT INQUISITOR.
SO IT SAYS.
BASED ON ACCUSATIONS AND THE AFOREMENTIONED DOUBTS...
...THERE IS AMPLE REASON TO SUSPECT THE CRIMSON SCHOLAR OF HERESY.

The Holy Kingdom and Central Church are displeased by these developments and accuse the Crimson Scholar of heresy, and they attempt to hold a trial. However, the Demon Queen left for the Spirit World's Palace of the Underworld and is absent at the time. The Older Maid Sister is forced to use a magic ring to change her appearance and face the inquisition.

The Older Maid Sister endures terrible mistreatment before the eyes of a crowd of commoners, but she quietly begins to speak. "I was born a serf, but I am a human with a soul."

Her words touch the hearts of the people gathered there, and the Lonely Winter King announces he will protect the Crimson Scholar. As a result, the Southern Kingdoms form the Three

SUMMARY OF MAOYU VOLUME 4

Lectures on Archenemy and Hero
Outline of volume.4

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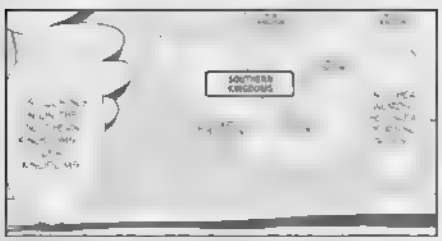

THE HERO

The young man convinced to work with the Demon Queen to end the war. He possesses exceptional combat strength. As the Demon Queen's Black Knight, he suppressed the pro-war elements of the demons.

THE FEMALE KNIGHT

One of three traveling companions who once subdued demons with the Hero. Formerly the prioress of the Lakeside Convent, she now commanders the armies of the Winter Kingdom.

THE DEMON QUEEN

Monarch of the demons. Searching for a world she has not yet seen, she intends to truly end the war by using her vast knowledge as a weapon. Currently she has returned to the Spirit World.

THE CHIEF MAID

Has been caring for the Demon Queen since she was a child. She is related to the Demon Queen and devotes herself daily to the pursuit of the "Way of the Maid." Currently she has returned to the Spirit World with the Demon Queen.

THE OLDER MAID SISTER

A former serf working in the Demon Queen's mansion. She is put on trial in place of the Demon Queen, and her words during the trial touched the hearts of the people.

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After his father and the former king died in battle, he took over the Winter Kingdom. When the Crimson Scholar (the Demon Queen) is accused of heresy, he uses the opportunity to break away from the Central Continent.

THE YOUNG MERCHANT

Leader of the Alliance, the human world's largest economic organization. He falls in love with the Demon Queen during their negotiations and is deeply affected by her. He begins acting independently.

PRINCESS FIRE DRAGON

Beloved daughter of Archduke Fire Dragon. She believes the Black Knight (the Hero), who defeated her father, is the man who will become her husband. She pays a visit to the Young Merchant in the human world in her pursuit of a certain object.

THE BUTLER

An old man employed by the Lonely Winter King. His true identity is the Archer who once traveling with the Hero. He has grown even more vigorous in his old age.

THE BLIZZARD QUEEN

Queen of the Winter Kingdom's neighboring nation, the Ice Kingdom. She supports the Lonely Winter King and enters the Three Kingdom Trade Alliance along with the Iron Kingdom. She dispatches the Noble's Son to gather information.

THE SHREWD TREASURER

A man who always waits by the Young Merchant's side. As his right hand man, he precisely executes his orders with a cool head.

ARCHDUKE FIRE DRAGON

Leader of the Fire Dragon Clan, one of the largest demon clans. He thinks highly of the Black Knight (the Hero) who defeated him.

THE COMMANDER OF THE EASTERN FORTRESS

Officer of the Holy Key Expeditionary Force. After the One Eyed Commander flees, he begins negotiating with demons to protect the remaining humans.

THE MIDNIGHT SUN KING

King of the Midnight Sun Kingdom. Due to discord between himself and the Lonely Winter King during the Aurora Island Reclamation Operation, his is the only Southern Kingdom not participating in the trade alliance.

THE ONE EYED COMMANDER

Former commander of the Holy Key Expeditionary Force. Though he is sentenced to death for losing a battle, he is saved by the Midnight Sun King. He despises the Winter Kingdom.

THE SOLDIER'S SON

The son of an Iron Kingdom soldier. Studied under the Demon Queen with the other sons. Currently he has returned to his home.

THE MERCHANT'S SON

The third son of a merchant family who once studied under the Demon Queen. At the Demon Queen's recommendation, he begins working in the royal palace of the Winter Kingdom, and he currently works hard as the treasurer.

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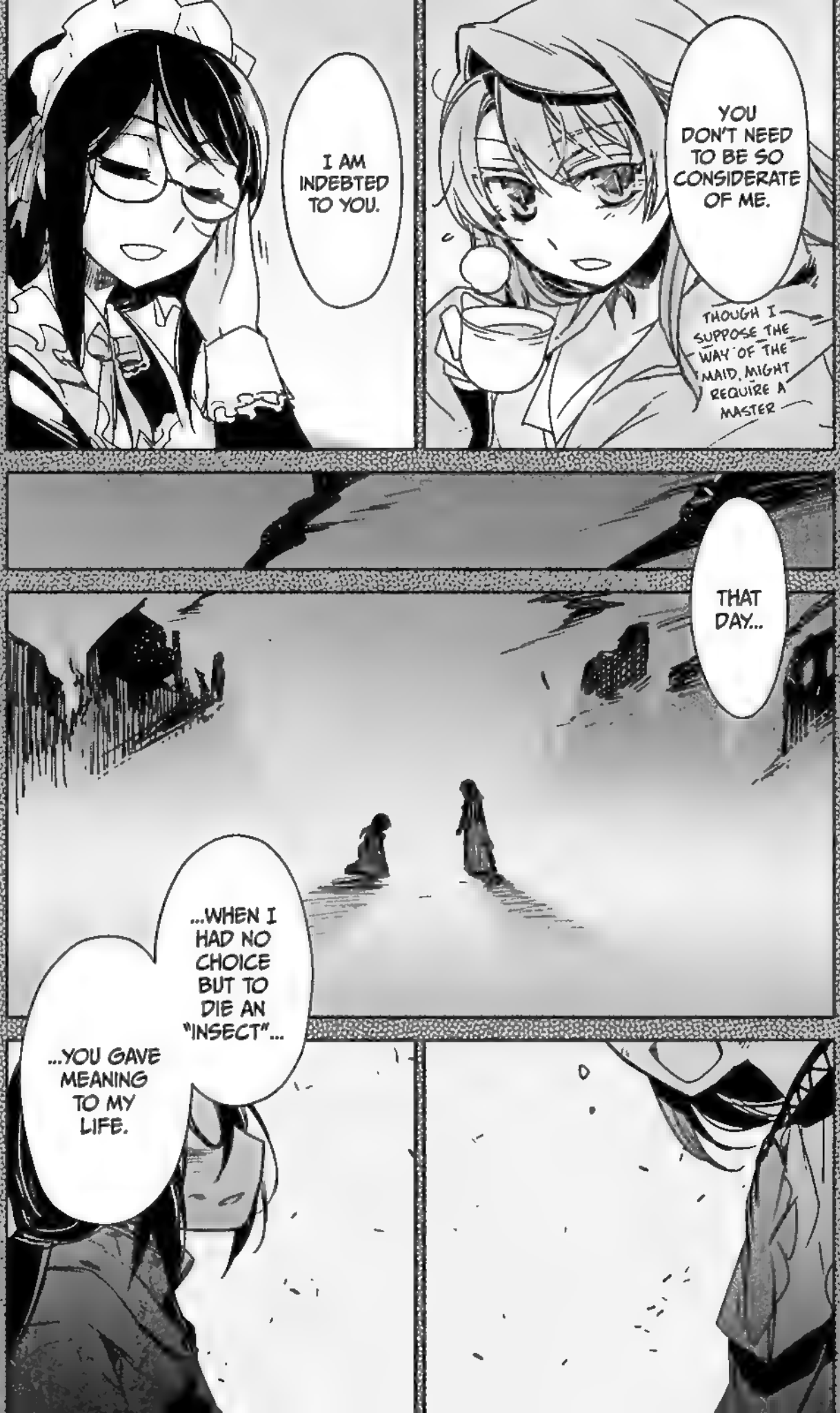
STEP
STEP

MIS-
TRESS.
THERE
YOU
ARE.
STEP
STEP

MIS-TRESS? YOU MEAN ME?
WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME THAT ?
YOU'VE NEVER CALLED ME THAT BEFORE
I'M GLAD YOU NOTICED!
IT IS THE ETIQUETTE OF THE MAIDS OF A CERTAIN REGION.
THERE IS CUSTOM...
...TO CALL MEN "MAS-TER" AND WOMEN "MIS-TRESS."
THE WAY OF THE MAID IS PRO-FOUND.
....
YOUR SKIRT IS AWFULLY SHORT.
THIS IS THE GARB OF THAT REGION.

MISTRESS, DID YOU STAY UP ALL NIGHT AGAIN?
POUR
コポ…
コポ…
YES.
IF YOU DON'T STOP, YOU'LL MAKE YOURSELF SICK.
I GUESS.
IT'S INTERESTING, THOUGH. I CAN'T STOP.
YOU'RE ALWAYS WORKING ON BEING A MAID, AREN'T YOU?
I MUST HONE MY MAID TECHNIQUES.
IF I DON'T WORK, I WILL NEVER DISCOVER THE TRUTH BEHIND MAIDS.
PLEASE DON'T COMPARE WHAT I DO TO THE WAY YOU HIDE INSIDE AND READ ONLY BOOKS.
HMMPH.
HERE YOU ARE.
CLINK
カチャ
THANK YOU.


I AM INDEBTED TO YOU.
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SO CONSIDERATE OF ME.
THOUGH I SUPPOSE THE WAY OF THE MAID, MIGHT REQUIRE A MASTER
THAT DAY...
...WHEN I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DIE AN "INSECT"...
...YOU GAVE MEANING TO MY LIFE.

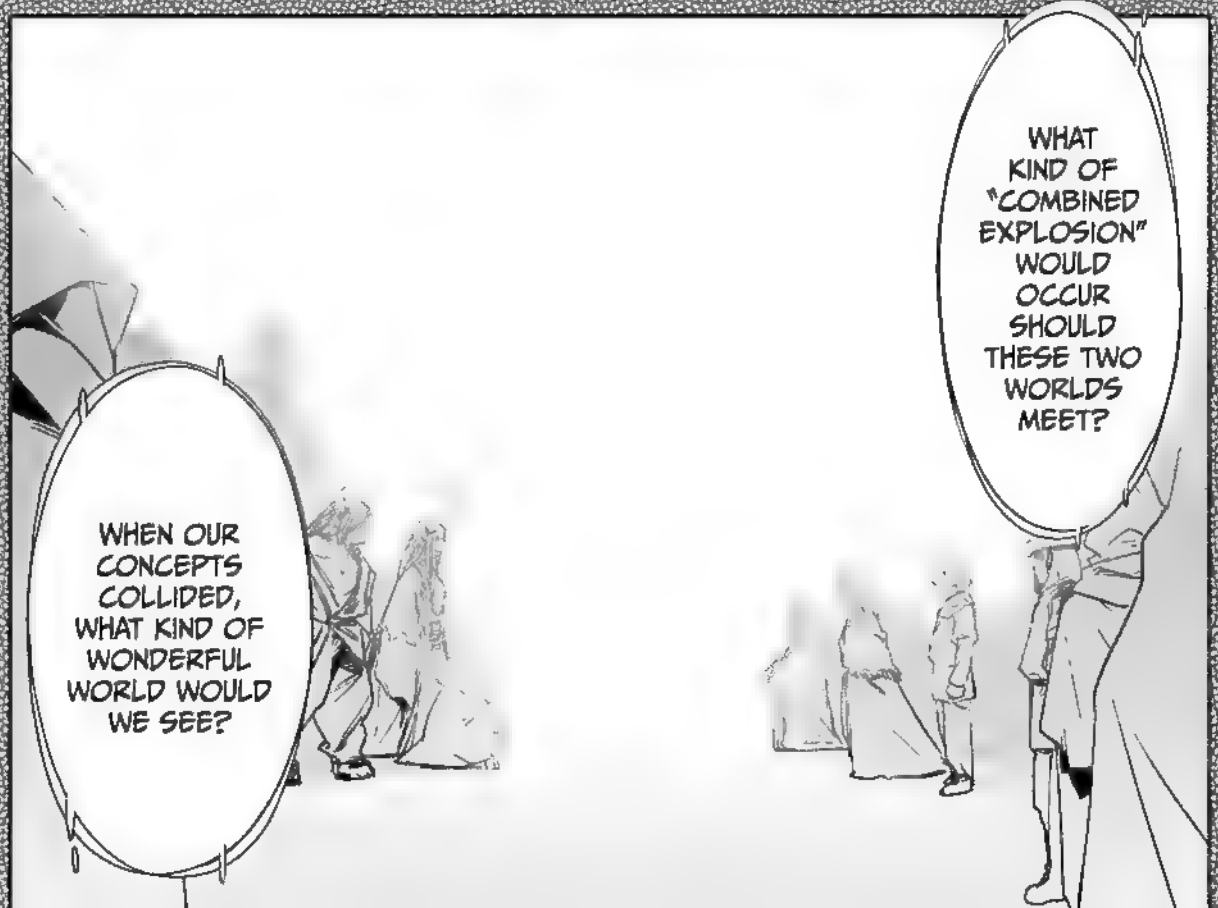
....
WOULD YOU LIKE MORE TEA?
YEAH, COULD I GET SOME?
YES.
GIVE ME A MOMENT, MISTRESS.
YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP DOING THAT?

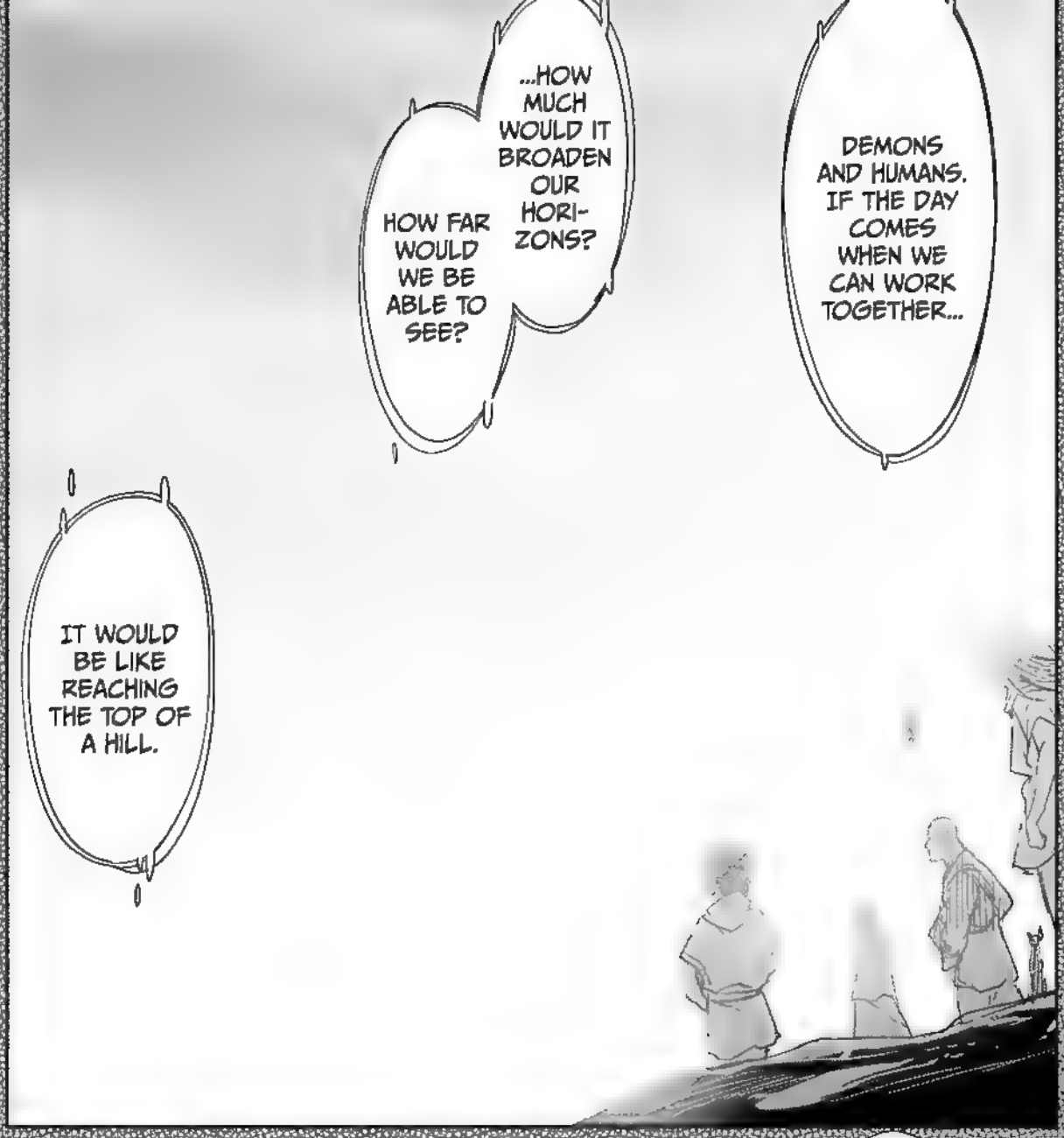
GOOD GRIEF
PROFITS!
OPTI-MIZA-TION!
FUNDA-MEN-TALS!
CREDIT!
PARETO!
I NEVER LOSE INTEREST.
THIS MUST BE VALUE. ITS NAME IS THE THING ITSELF.
BY GIVING NAMES TO CONCEPTS, NEW VALUE SYSTEMS ARE DISCOVERED AND CREATED.
IN THIS CASE, DISCOVERY AND CREATION ARE THE SAME ACTION, AND IN THAT MOMENT, THE WORLD EXPANDS.

WE GIVE NAMES TO CONCEPTS.
WE EXPAND THE WORLD WITH NEW CONCEPTS.
IN OTHER WORDS, THE NUMBER OF VIEWPOINTS IS THE COEFFICIENT OF THE WORLD.
THE MORE VIEWPOINTS YOU POSSESS, THE MORE WORLDS YOU CAN SEE.
THAT IS THE MEANING OF STUDYING KNOWLEDGE.
THE MEANING OF MY CLAN'S EXISTENCE.
CONCEPTS AND CONCEPTS SOMETIMES MEET AND FUSE.
THEY CAUSE CHANGES THOSE WHO CAME UP WITH THE CONCEPTS COULDN'T EVEN IMAGINE.
THOSE ARE THE FRUITS WE ACQUIRE.

KNOWING IS WONDERFUL.
THE WORLD IS WONDERFUL.
THERE ARE COUNTLESS EXISTENCES IN THIS WORLD EXPANDING THIS WORLD AT AN ACCELERATING RATE.
NOT ONLY DEMONS, BUT ALSO...

...HUMANS.


WHAT KIND OF "COMBINED EXPLOSION" WOULD OCCUR SHOULD THESE TWO WORLDS MEET?
WHEN OUR CONCEPTS COLLIDED, WHAT KIND OF WONDERFUL WORLD WOULD WE SEE?


DEMONS AND HUMANS. IF THE DAY COMES WHEN WE CAN WORK TOGETHER...
...HOW MUCH WOULD IT BROADEN OUR HORI-ZONS?
HOW FAR WOULD WE BE ABLE TO SEE?
IT WOULD BE LIKE REACHING THE TOP OF A HILL.

IN THAT MOMENT, IF DEMONS AND HUMANS COULD EXCEED THE LIMITS OF THEIR KIND...
...AND BE KNOWN AS "CREATURES WITH SOULS," THAT WOULD BE WON-DERFUL.

SNORE
THANK YOU FOR WAITING...
...MIS-TRESS.
STEP
STEP
STEP
GULP
SIP

YOU'RE NOT A BAD DRINKER.
HA HA HA HA HA
BURN
PHEW.

I'M SORRY.
UM, THE PRINCESS IS...
RIGHT.
SHE'S OUT RIGHT NOW.
WE MISSED EACH OTHER.

IT'S RICE WINE BREWED BY DEMONS.
GLUG
THIS IS GOOD LIQUOR.
I OWE THIS CITY FOR LOOKING AFTER MY DAUGHTER.
GLUG

I'M WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING BESIDES MY DAUGHTER.
COMMANDER, DO YOU KNOW OF THE BLUE DEMONS?
THE BLUE DEMONS? I'VE FOUGHT THEM BEFORE, BUT I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THEM.
I COULDN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DEMONS BACK THEN
THE BLUE DEMONS ARE THE BLUE SKINNED DESCENDANTS OF GENIES.
THEY'RE ONE OF THE POWERFUL EIGHT MAJOR DEMON CLANS.
THEIR MAGIC IS POWERFUL, AND THEIR COMBAT STRENGTH IS EXCEPTIONAL.
THEY DO NOT MIX WITH OTHER CLANS, AND PURITY IS THEIR PRINCIPLE.
THIS MAJOR CLAN HAS PRODUCED FOUR FORMER DEMON KINGS.
THEIR CLAN ALSO DESIRES THE HUMAN WORLD.

I'VE HEARD PEOPLE HAVE SEEN THE BLUE DEMONS AROUND THIS CITY LATELY.

IT IS TROU-BLING.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH THE BLUE DEMONS LIVING HERE, BUT...
GATEWAY CITY IS A MIX OF HUMANS AND DEMONS.

BY THE WAY, WHERE IS MY DAUGHTER?
WHEN WILL SHE RETURN?

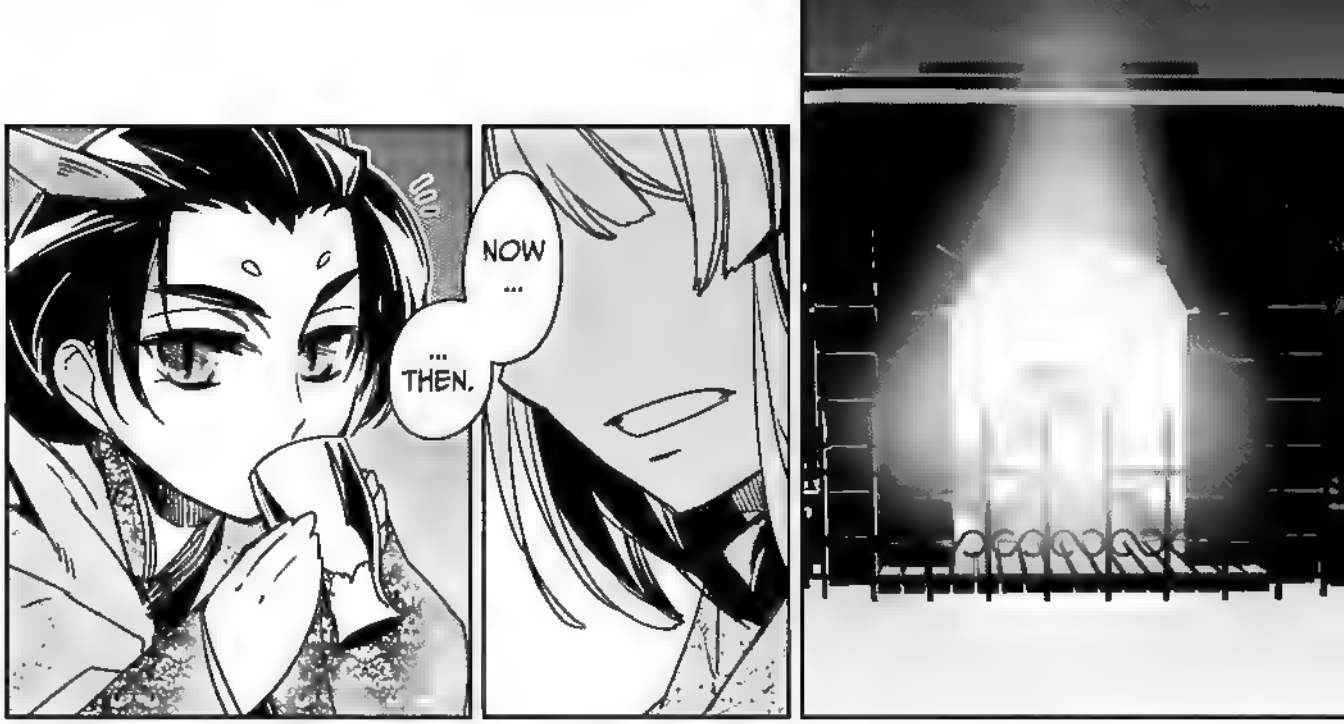
GOOD.
VERY WELL. I'LL LOOK INTO IT IM-MEDIATELY.
I APPRECI-ATE THE INFOR-MATION.

HOWEVER, SALT IS VALUABLE IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.
SINCE WE LOST AURORA ISLAND, OUR SOURCE OF SALT, THERE HAVE BEEN SHORTAGES EVERYWHERE.
THE OLD CLOUD DRAGON, HUH? HE DOES BUSINESS IN A BIG WAY.
SHE'S GETTING SALT FOR THE DEMON MERCHANT.
I HAVE AN IDEA.
!
WHERE IS IT?
ELSE-WHERE, HUH?
WE MUST SEEK ELSE-WHERE THE THINGS WE CANNOT GET HERE.
IT IS...

THE HUMAN WORLD?
!
GLUG GLUG
ぴぴ
I FEEL REJUVE-NATED.
WHEW
ホウ…

YOU MADE MY BLOOD RUN COLD.
WHEW
TRULY.
THE HUMAN WORLD IS A COLD PLACE.
?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
YOUR LIQUOR ISN'T BAD, EITHER.
IT WARMS ME UP.
GLUG
GLUG
YOU CAN DRINK THE ENTIRE JAR.
COME TO THINK OF IT, IT WAS QUITE WARM OVER THERE.
YES.
WE DO NOT HAVE WHAT YOU CALL... WINTER.
I'LL LIGHT A FIRE IN THE FIRE-PLACE.
GIVE ME A MO-MENT.
CREAK

THE FLINT
CLANK
CLATTER
BURN
WHOOSH


NOW ...
... THEN.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, PRINCESS?
I JUST TOLD YOU.
I CAME TO SEE YOU.

I HAD A PASSING WITCH DETERMINE YOUR LOCATION USING DETECTION MAGIC.
I CANNOT USE MAGIC.
I ACQUIRED A DISPLACE-MENT TALIS-MAN FROM A CHARM MAKER.
HOW DID YOU GET HERE?
DIS-PLACE-MENT MAGIC?

NOW, THEN.
WHAT IS IT YOUR DESIRE, PRINCESS?
SALT.
SALT IS VALUABLE IN THE SPIRIT WORLD. I WANT YOU TO LEND ME SOME.

HOW MUCH?
I DON'T KNOW. AS MUCH AS NECESSARY.
THAT'S A RATHER VAGUE REQUEST.
?
THAT'S WHY I CAME.

I CAME BECAUSE...
...I BELIEVE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FULFILL THIS REQUEST.

YES.
I'M JUST THINK-ING.

WERE YOU LISTEN-ING?

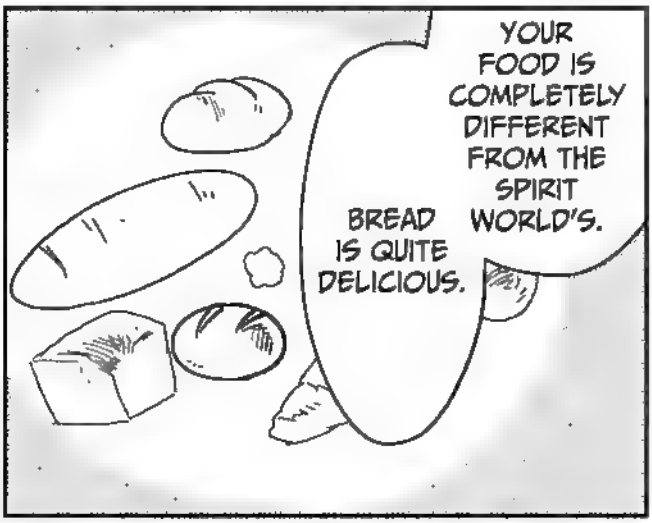
I AM NOT A FOOLISH GIRL...
...THOUGH IT MAY SEEM LIKE A RIDDLE TO A MAN OF DEEP THOUGHTS.
IS THIS SOME KIND OF RIDDLE?

HOWEVER, WISE GIRLS USE MEN TO ACQUIRE EVEN MORE...
...WITHOUT LIFTING A FINGER.
CLEVER GIRLS GATHER ALL THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD AND USE THAT KNOWLEDGE TO DO THINGS.
THOSE ARE THE TEACHINGS OF DRAGONS I LEARNED FROM MY MOTHER.
IF IT WILL LEAD TO YOU ACQUIRING MORE SALT...
...I WILL ASK YOU RIDDLES OR WHATEVER ELSE YOU WISH.
I KNOW AN HONORABLE WOMAN HAS MEN USE THEIR STRENGTH FOR HER.

EVERY-
THING
IS SO
STRANGE.
I
COULD
NEVER
GROW
TIRED
OF IT.

IS THIS
YOUR FIRST
TIME IN
THE HUMAN
WORLD?
OF
COURSE.

IT'S SIGNIFI-
CANTLY MORE
EXPENSIVE
THAN I HEARD,
SO I'VE
HAD SOME
TROUBLE WITH
MY TRAVELING
EXPENSES.


YOUR
FOOD IS
COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT
FROM THE
SPIRIT
WORLD'S.
BREAD
IS QUITE
DELICIOUS.

I NEVER
IMAGINED
AN ENTIRE
BUILDING
COULD BE
A MUSICAL
INSTRUMENT.
HUMANS
COME
UP WITH
AMAZING
IDEAS.

CHURCHES
ARE
GOOD
TOO.
I FIND
THEIR
HYMNS
EXCITING.

MORE THAN ANYTHING ...
...YOUR BLUE SKY AND BRIGHT SUN...
WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS HOW IMPRESSED I WAS.
THE SPIRIT WORLD'S SUN AND SKY ARE GREEN.
THOUGH IT WAS NIGHT WHEN I WENT, AND I COULDN'T TELL.
THE HUMAN WORLD IS TRULY INTER-ESTING.

I HID MYSELF.
EVEN WHEN I WAS DISCOVERED, IT WAS EASY TO FOOL THEM.
IT'S A MYSTERY YOU DIDN'T GET YOURSELF INTO DANGER.
WILL YOU BE STAYING HERE A WHILE?
CLATTER
REALLY? THANK YOU!
I WILL ACQUIRE YOUR SALT.

YOU...
YOUR EXIS-TENCE...
...MAY LEAD ME TO SOMETHING "INCOMPRE-HENSIBLE."
"INCOM-PREHEN-SIBLE"?
WOULDN'T YOU AGREE WE KNOW TOO LITTLE?

ABOUT EACH OTHER, PROBABLY.
ABOUT WHAT?
RUSTLE
THE ICE KINGDOM THE BLIZZARD PALACE

MY AUGUST QUEEN.
SINCE I LEFT THE KINGDOM SOME DAYS AGO, MUCH TIME HAS PASSED.
THOUGH TRACES OF AUTUMN REMAIN IN THE CENTRAL CONTINENT...
...THE NUMBER OF CARRIAGES DRIVING THROUGH THE STREETS ARE FEW, AND THE EXPRESSIONS OF THE PEOPLE ARE SULLEN...
...BECAUSE THE PRICES OF COMMODITIES, INCLUDING WHEAT, ARE RISING.
SINCE COMING HERE, I HAVE MET WITH MANY LANDOWNERS, ARISTOCRATS, AND MEMBERS OF ROYALTY...
...BUT THEY ALL HAVE ONE OF THREE COUNTENANCES.
THEIR FACES EITHER SHINE WITH DELIGHT FOR WAR...
...TWIST WITH THE DIFFICULTY OF THEIR DECISION ...
...OR THEIR FACES ARE GLOOMY WITH CONCERN FOR THEIR PEOPLE.

I SHALL SEND YOU ONE OF THE LATEST DRESSES AND PAIR OF LONG GLOVES.
I BELIEVE THE COLOR VIOLET WOULD SUIT YOU.
HOW-EVER, THE CENTRAL CONTINENT DOES NOT DISAPPOINT.
THEIR HIGH SOCIETY EVENTS ARE ELEGANT...
..AND BE-WITCHING LOW-CUT DRESSES ARE CUR-RENTLY IN STYLE.
ニス GIGGLE
P.P.S.
FLIP
CRINKLE
P.S.
IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND MORE MONEY FOR TRAVELING EXPENSES.

I TOLD HER SHE SHOULD FORM A SECRET ALLIANCE.
THE QUEEN OF THE LAKE KINGDOM SAID A 60 PERCENT CUSTOMS DUTY WAS A LITTLE HIGH.
HAVE THEY AR-RIVED?
OH, YES. APPARENTLY THE LAKE KINGDOM SENT CHARCOAL AND BLANKETS.
FIVE OTHER LANDOWNERS SAID THEY WOULD HAVE TROUBLE OVERCOMING FAMINE THIS YEAR...
...SO I SUG-GESTED ...
...THEY ASK THE ICE KINGDOM FOR AS-SISTANCE.

SEND A SECRET MESSENGER TO THE LAKE KINGDOM!
YES, MA'AM!
STEP
AND...
...ARRANGE FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO BE SEND TO THE MERCHANT'S SON FOR TRAVELING EXPENSES.
I SEE.
MAS-TER.
THE CAPTAIN OF THE MERCENAR-IES YOU HIRED IS HERE.

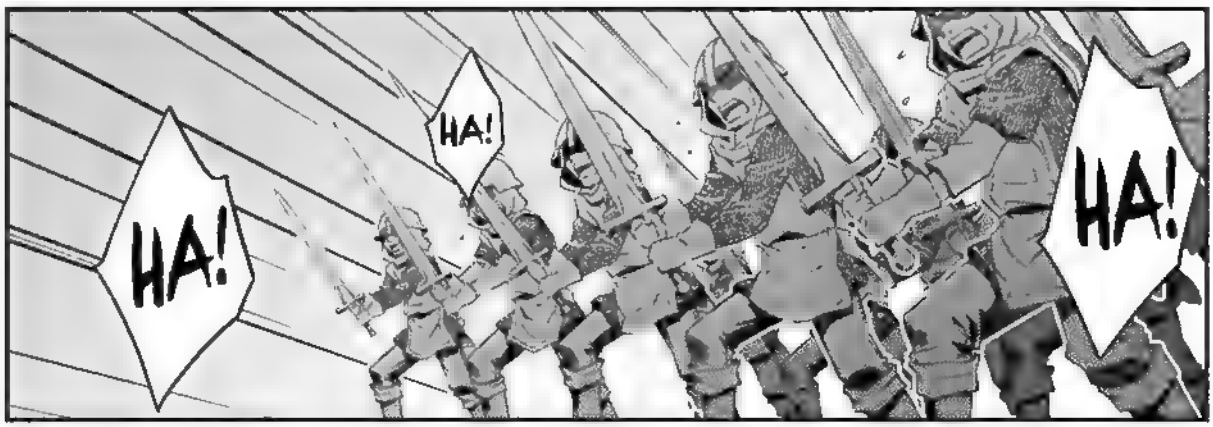
A HUNDRED MEN, HUH?
ONE HUNDRED MERCENARIES SHOULD PROVE USEFUL TO YOU.
I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU UNTIL THE WAR ENDS.
HEY, BOSS.
CLINK
MERCENARY CAPTAIN
IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CAN INCREASE THOSE NUMBERS?
THE CHURCH AND HOLY KINGDOM HAVE ORDERED THIS WAR.
IT'S THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW OFF MY STRENGTH.
NOBLES MUST MUSTER FORCES NO LESS THAN THE KING'S.
THERE'S A LOT OF MONEY TO BE MADE IN THIS.

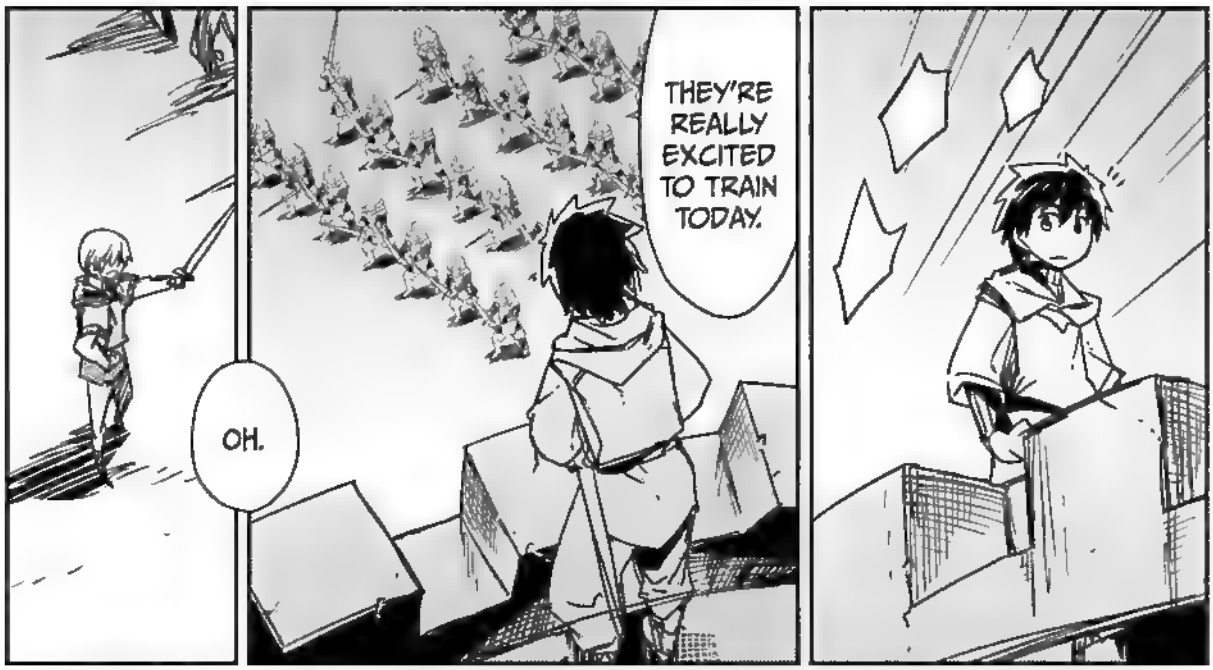
AH.
...I MAY BE ABLE TO GET TWO OR 300 MORE.
IF I REACH OUT TO OTHER MERCENARY COMPANIES AND MERCENARIES...
...I SUPPOSE...
OF COURSE.
HOW'S DOUBLE YOUR COMPANY'S CURRENT PAY?
BUT...
...OUR PAYMENT...
YOU KNOW WHAT VIOLENT MEN WANT FROM A BATTLEFIELD.
WHAT?
THAT'S NOT ENOUGH.

HMMPH.
I SEE.
SMIRK
HUH?
OH.
WHISPER
WHISPER
VERY WELL.
WHEN YOU ENTER THE WINTER KINGDOM...
...I'LL ALLOW YOU TO PILLAGE THE FIRST TWO VILLAGES YOU ENCOUNTER.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE SUCH A REASON-ABLE EMPLOYER.

BOSS!
DID YOU WORK OUT A DEAL?
ROAR
CHATTER
CHATTER
MEN!
AT OUR EMPLOYER'S SUGGESTION, WE'LL INCREASE OUR NUMBERS!
SPLIT UP AND REACH OUT TO OTHER MERCENARY COMPANIES!
CHEER
WHISTLE
IN EXCHANGE, WE'LL BE PAID DOUBLE.
JUST OUR COMPANY.
WHAT?
CHATTER

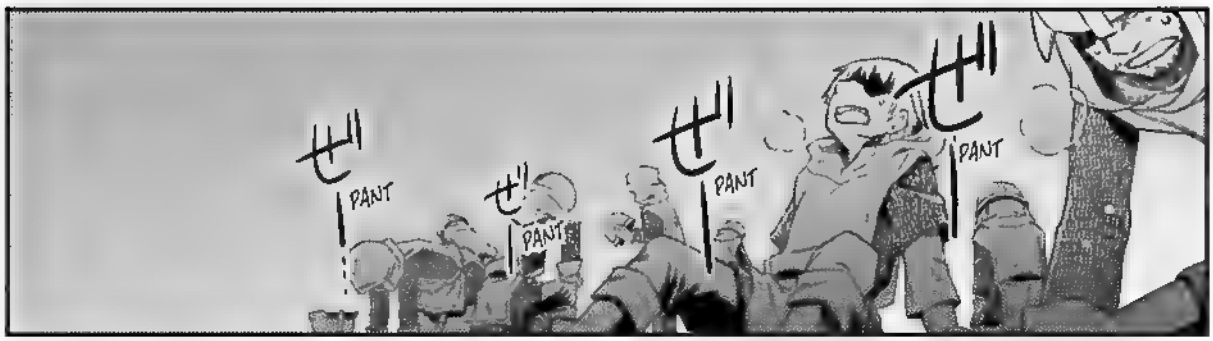
ROAR
おおおおお!
LET'S MAKE SOME MONEY, MEN!
IT'S OUR FIRST BIG JOB IN A WHILE!

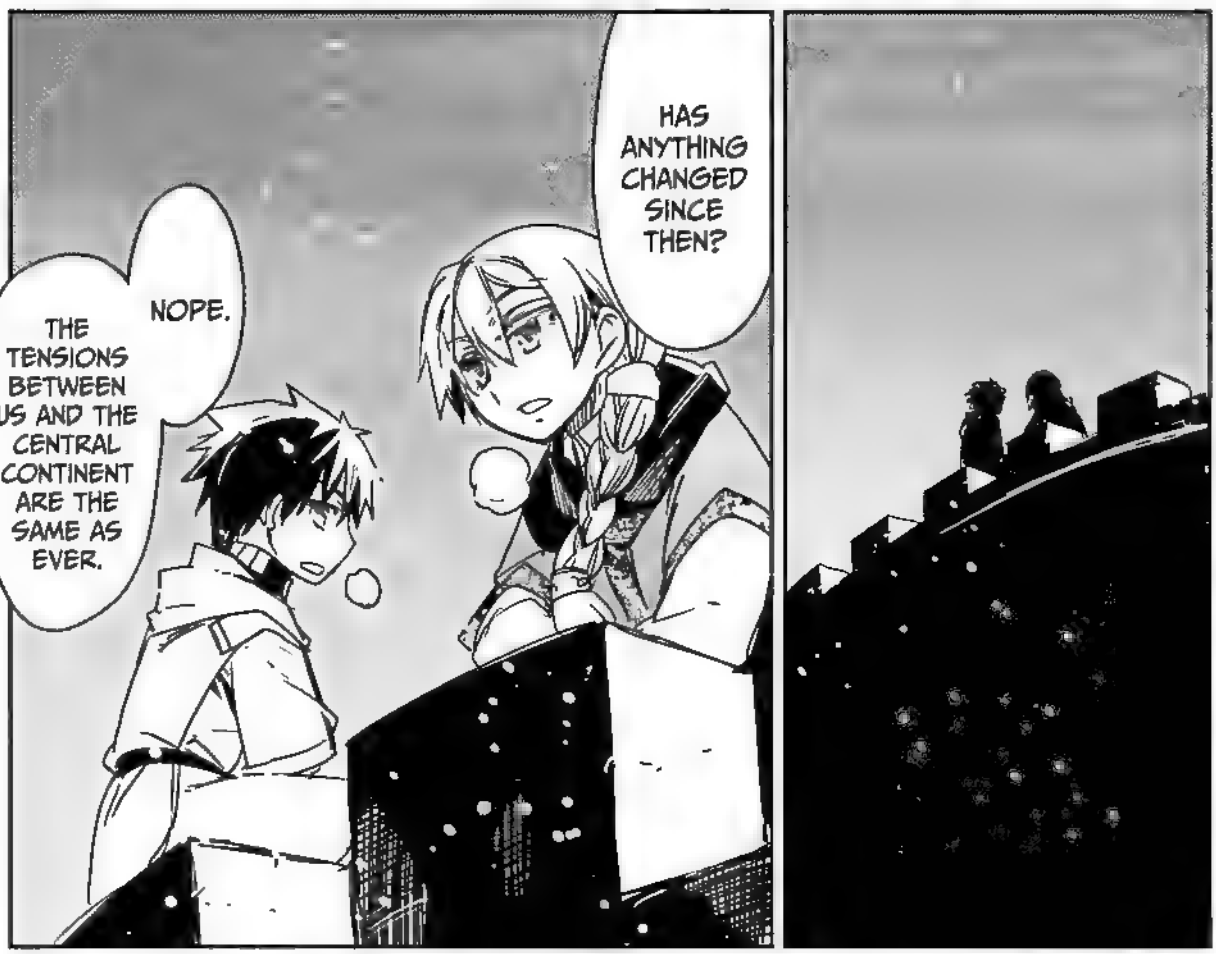

HA!
HA!
HA!


OH.
THEY'RE REALLY EXCITED TO TRAIN TODAY.

HEY!
I SAFELY ESCORTED THE SISTERS TO THE IRON KINGDOM.
THE IRON FIST KING TOLD ME TO LEAVE THE REST TO HIM.
YOU'RE BACK.
YES.
THEY'VE GROWN RATHER RUSTY WHILE I WAS GONE.
TWITCH
びく
SORRY ABOUT THAT.
I'M NOT A VERY GOOD TEACHER.

TODAY'S TRAINING WON'T BE HALF HEARTED!
YES, MA'AM!


PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT


HAS ANYTHING CHANGED SINCE THEN?
NOPE.
THE TENSIONS BETWEEN US AND THE CENTRAL CONTINENT ARE THE SAME AS EVER.

THE DEMON QUEEN IS STILL INSIDE HER CASTLE.
I WONDER WHEN SHE'S COMING BACK.

WHAT ABOUT THE SPIRIT WORLD?
OH.
THINGS OVER THERE ARE PRETTY PEACE-FUL.

NOPE.

....
YOU STILL HAVEN'T LEARNED ANYTHING ABOUT THE MAGICIAN?

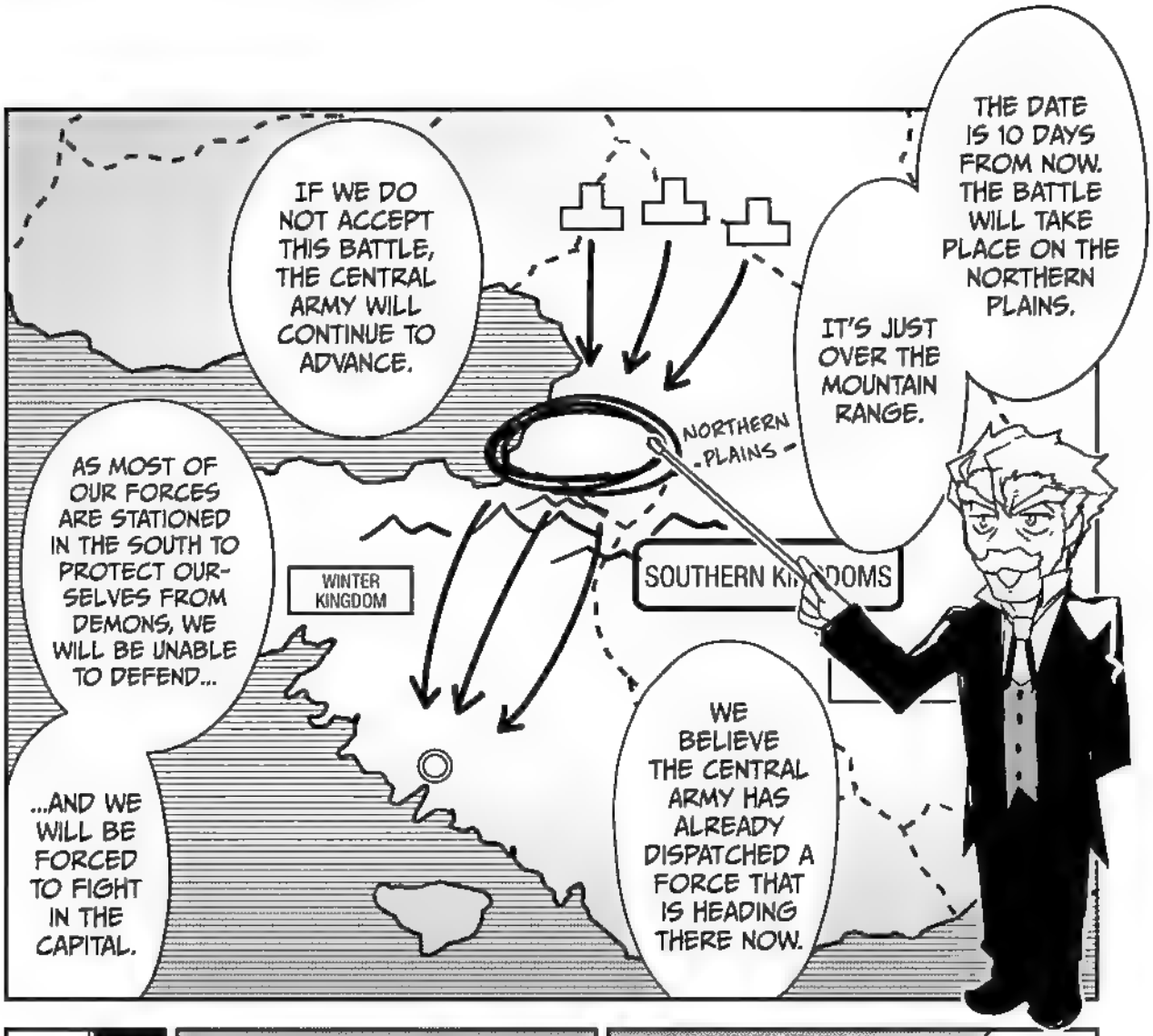
I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHERE THE LEGENDARY LIBRARY IS, EITHER.
APPAR-ENTLY SHE HEADED TOWARD A LEG-ENDARY LIBRARY...
...BUT I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE SHE WENT AFTER THAT.

YOU'RE RIGHT.
THAT SOUNDS PLAUSIBLE FOR HER.
HA HA
SHE PROBABLY WENT TO A LIBRARY I CAN'T FIND...
...AND IS STILL COOPED UP THERE READING BOOKS.
BUT IT'S HER WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.
DASH
THE CENTRAL CONTINENT HAS DECLARED WAR!
PANT
THERE YOU ARE.
PANT
WHAT'S WRONG?

WE HEARD THERE WAS A DECLARATION OF WAR!
SLAM

THIS ARRIVED THIS MORNING. IT'S A FORMAL DECLARATION OF WAR IN WRITING.
A LETTER OF EXPULSION FROM THE CHURCH ARRIVED AT THE SAME TIME.

IS IT THE RISING PRICES?
IT'S TOO SOON!
WHY IS THIS HAPPEN-ING?
THE RISING PRICE OF WHEAT AND THE SHORT-AGE OF GOODS.
PERHAPS THEY ARE TRYING TO PLUNDER THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM TO PASS THE WINTER.
OR PERHAPS THE ROYALTY AND NOBILITY DECIDED TO USE THE MONEY THEY EARNED FROM THE SUDDEN JUMP IN WHEAT PRICES..
...TO FUND A BRIEF AND DECISIVE WAR.
FWIP
THE LETTER INDICATES THE LOCATION AND DATE OF THE BATTLE.
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
RUSTLE-

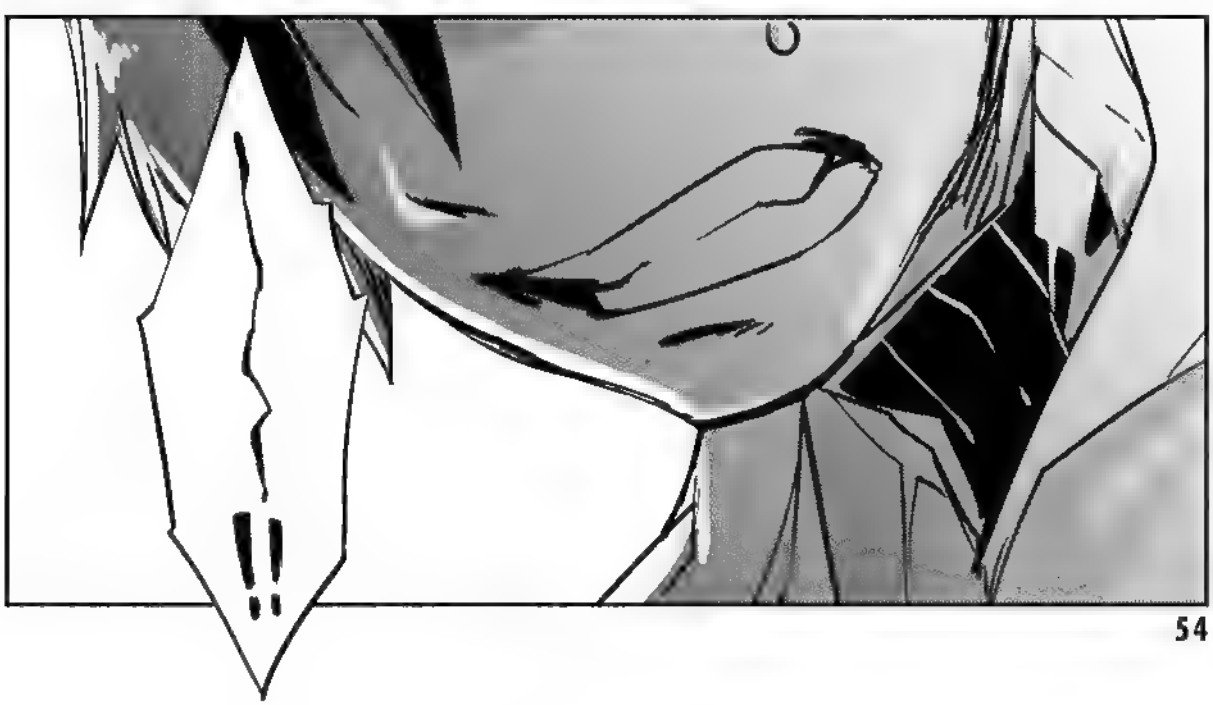

IF WE DO NOT ACCEPT THIS BATTLE, THE CENTRAL ARMY WILL CONTINUE TO ADVANCE.
AS MOST OF OUR FORCES ARE STATIONED IN THE SOUTH TO PROTECT OURSELVES FROM DEMONS, WE WILL BE UNABLE TO DEFEND...
...AND WE WILL BE FORCED TO FIGHT IN THE CAPITAL.
WINTER KINGDOM
NORTHERN PLAINS
SOUTHERN KINGDOMS
WE BELIEVE THE CENTRAL ARMY HAS ALREADY DISPATCHED A FORCE THAT IS HEADING THERE NOW.
IT'S JUST OVER THE MOUNTAIN RANGE.
THE DATE IS 10 DAYS FROM NOW. THE BATTLE WILL TAKE PLACE ON THE NORTHERN PLAINS.

CLENCH
IT MEANS WE CANNOT CHOOSE ...
...NOT TO ACCEPT THIS CHALLENGE.

HERO.
YOU'RE WRONG.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THE SEEDS WE SOWED YIELDED THIS!
BUT I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT!
I DON'T!
WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THIS MOMENT.
WE DO NOT RESENT YOU.
THIS IS A WAR OF FOOLISH HUMANS.
SINCE THE MOMENT WE ACKNOWL-EDGED SERFS HAVE RIGHTS, THIS BECAME A HUMAN WAR.
HERO.
NO.
YOU'RE WRONG.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PUT IT, BUT THIS IS WRONG.
THERE'S NO WAY THIS IS WHAT SHE WANTED.
THIS CAN'T POSSIBLY BE THE RESULT.

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ...
..."WHAT'S BEYOND THAT HILL?"

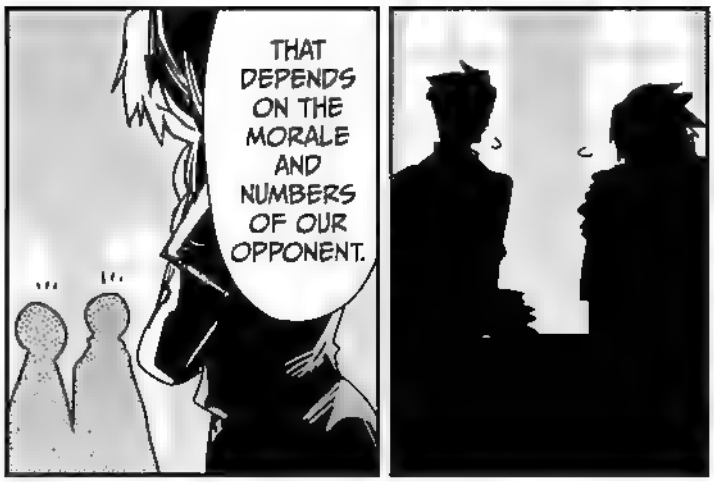

!!

I KNOW THAT'S RIGHT.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? HOW CAN I STOP THEM?
THOSE WHO WISH TO MONOPOLIZE THE LIMITED RESOURCES OF THIS WORLD TO ACHIEVE NOT WEALTH BUT SUPERIORITY.
ONLY MONOP-OLISTS DESIRE WAR.

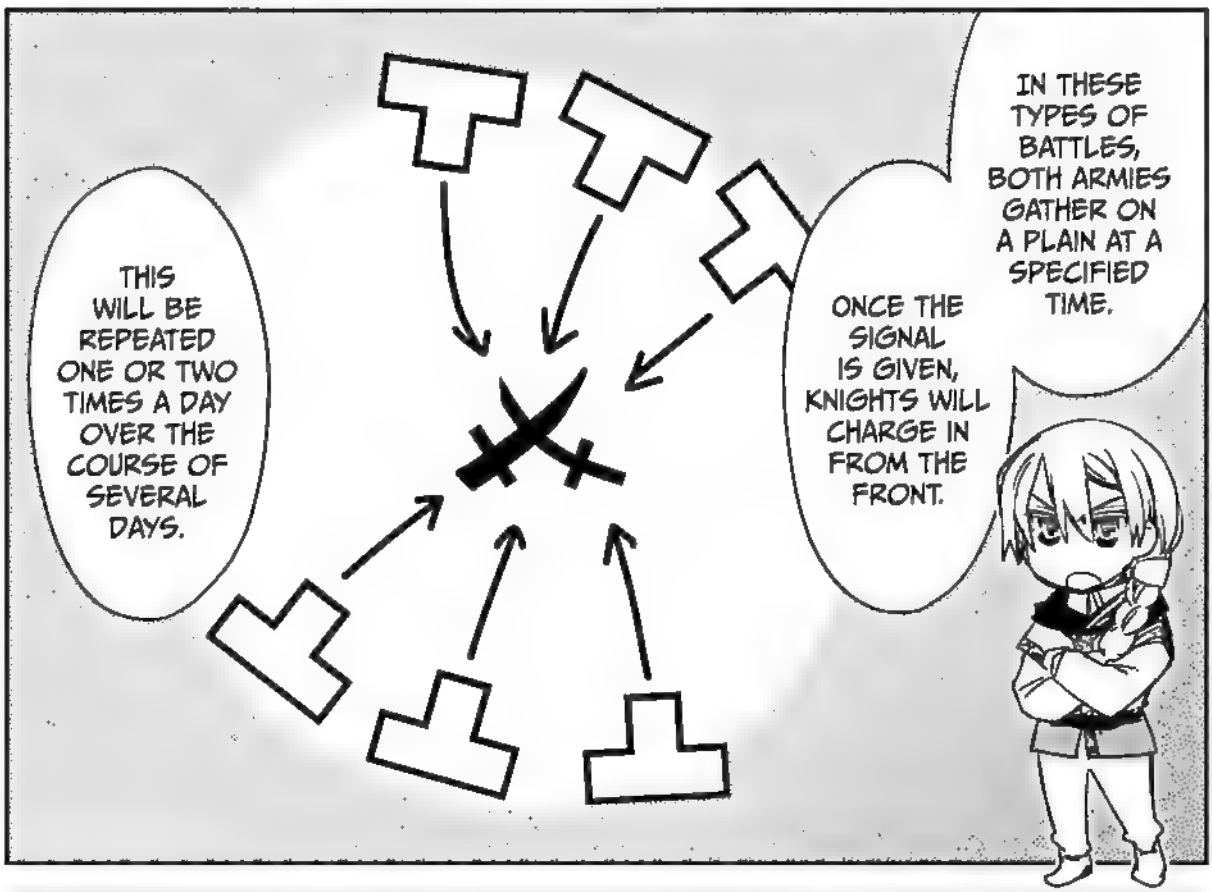
I'M SURE YOU HAVE! AFTER ALL, YOU'RE A HERO!

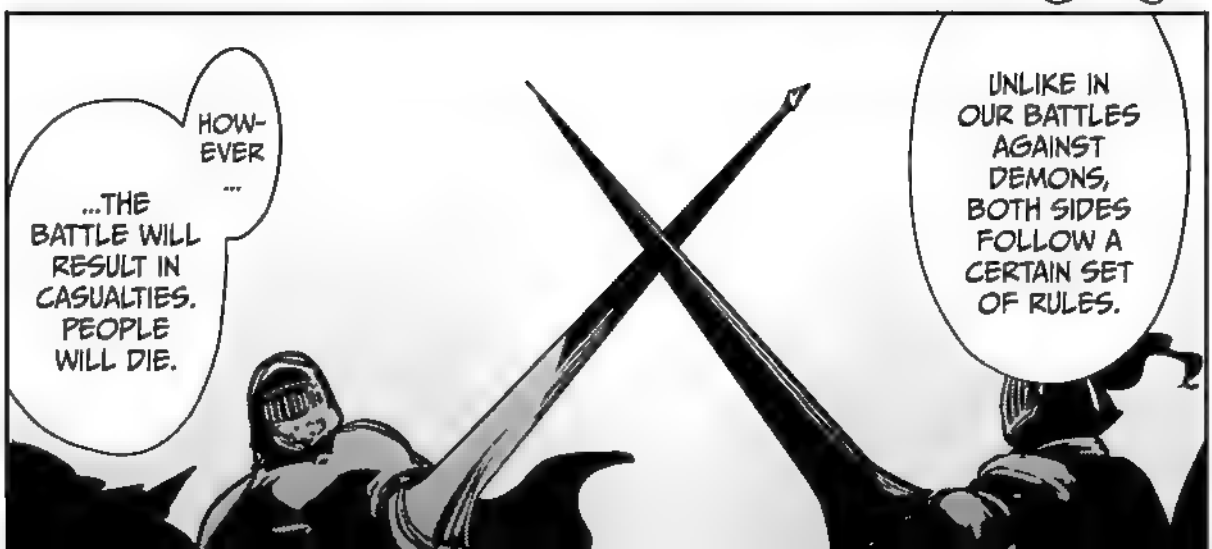
SHE COULD SOLVE THIS PROBLEM IN AN INSTANT.
WHY ISN'T THE DEMON QUEEN HERE NOW?

BEYOND THIS WAR...


THAT DEPENDS ON THE MORALE AND NUMBERS OF OUR OPPONENT.

....
SUPPOSING WE FIGHT, HOW MINIMAL CAN WE KEEP OUR LOSSES?


IN THESE TYPES OF BATTLES, BOTH ARMIES GATHER ON A PLAIN AT A SPECIFIED TIME.
ONCE THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN, KNIGHTS WILL CHARGE IN FROM THE FRONT.
THIS WILL BE REPEATED ONE OR TWO TIMES A DAY OVER THE COURSE OF SEVERAL DAYS.


UNLIKE IN OUR BATTLES AGAINST DEMONS, BOTH SIDES FOLLOW A CERTAIN SET OF RULES.
HOW-EVER ...
...THE BATTLE WILL RESULT IN CASUALTIES. PEOPLE WILL DIE.

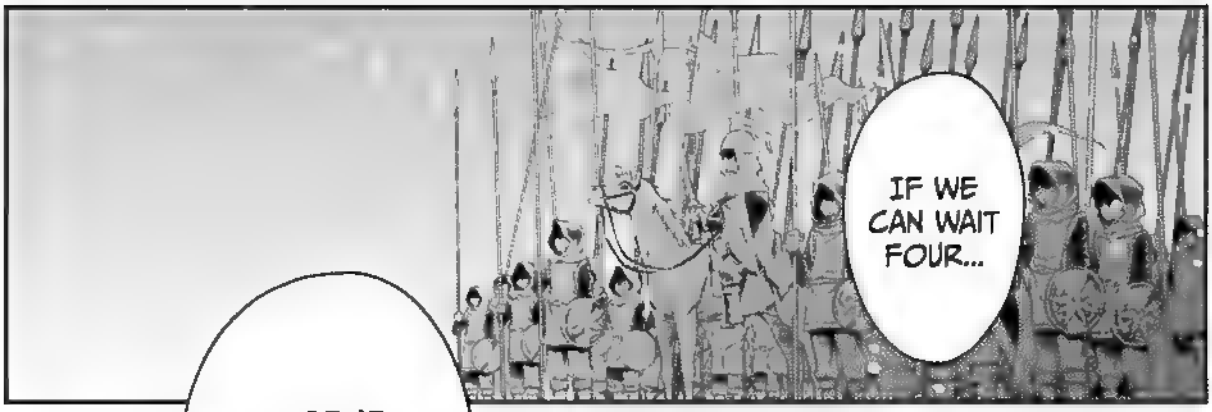
I DON'T WANT TO LET ANYONE DIE.
NOT OUR ALLIES OR THE CENTRAL CONTI-NENT'S ARMY.

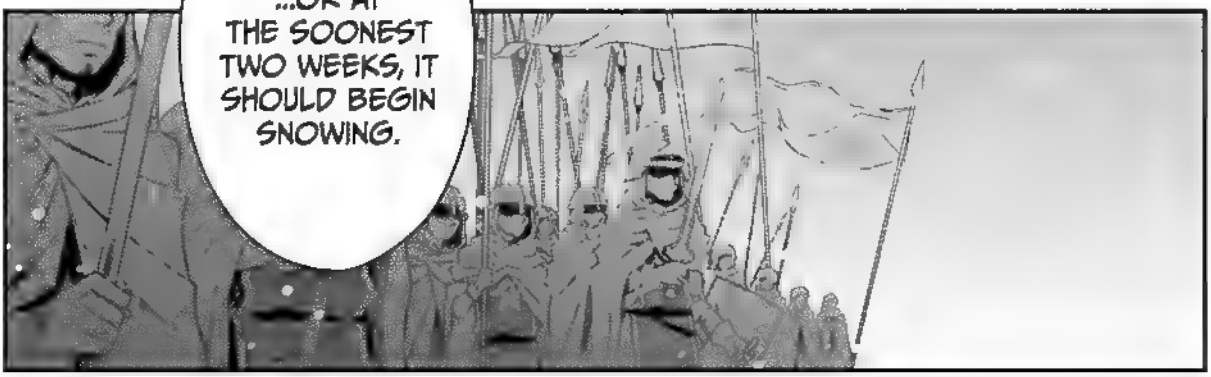
HERO.
THAT'S NOT...

IT'S NOT NAÏVETÉ
IT'S NECES-SARY FOR FUTURE DEVELOP-MENTS.

IT WILL DEPEND ON THE WEATHER.
THE SNOW!
THAT'S RIGHT.
THOUGH IT'S ALREADY FALLEN HERE, THERE HAS BEEN NO SNOWFALL ON THE NORTHERN PLAINS YET.
THE MOUNTAIN RANGE WRINGS THE SNOW FROM THE CLOUDS.
IF IT SNOWS, THEIR MORALE WILL FALL, AND THE BATTLE WILL BE DELAYED.

I DON'T KNOW WHEN THE PLAINS WILL BE COVERED IN SNOW...
...BUT ONCE IT BEGINS SNOWING IN EARNEST, WE'LL BE ABLE TO AVOID FIGHTING AS LONG AS IT KEEPS FALLING.


IF WE CAN WAIT FOUR...


...OR AT THE SOONEST TWO WEEKS, IT SHOULD BEGIN SNOWING.

IF WE CAN BUY THAT MUCH TIME...

THE END

Chapter 17

This is a War of Foolish Humans

SALT: AN EXISTENCE CRITICAL TO LIFE

The salt we are familiar with is essential to life, and it was so important in ancient times wars were fought over salt.

SALT: NECESSARY FOR LIFE

Salt is very familiar to us. Salt is deeply related to a variety of functions within our bodies including keeping our cells at their normal size, transmitting stimuli along our nerves, dissolving the food we eat, absorbing nutrients, and controlling moisture levels within our bodies.

Salt deficiency has a number of negative effects: wounds heal more slowly, internal organs do not function properly, and we grow lethargic. For nearly all the living creatures of the earth, salt is an important substance essential to life.

SINCE WE LOST AURORA ISLAND, OUR SOURCE OF SALT, THERE HAVE BEEN SHORTAGES EVERYWHERE.
HOWEVER, SALT IS VALUABLE IN THE SPIRIT WORLD.

The salt essential to living creatures is equally critical to demons as well.

In *Maoyu*, Princess Fire Dragon pays a visit to the Young Merchant and tells him salt is considered a valuable commodity in the Spirit World. Just as it is for humans, salt must be necessary to demons as well.

ONCE CONSIDERED A SYMBOL OF WEALTH

Salt is acquired by one of four methods: 1) drying sea water drawn into salt pans in the sun, 2) boiling down sea water, 3) scooping it out of saline lakes, and 4) mining for rock salt. The most popular methods are methods 1 and 2, but only three percent of seawater is salt. Saltpans must be constructed to acquire large amounts of salt, but they require vast amounts of land and sufficient sunlight. Method 3 is limited to the few regions where saline lakes are available. Method 4 efficiently yields large amounts of salt provided salt beds are discovered, but the advancements in geological technology that made salt beds easier to find didn't develop until after the dawn of the 20th Century.

In other words, securing salt has been the task of humankind for thousands of years. In ancient times, it was not uncommon for wars to be fought over places were salt could be acquired.

I WOULD LIKE YOU TO LEND ME THAT ISLAND
WE NEED SALT.
CURRENTLY THE ONLY CITY IN THE SPIRIT WORLD WHERE HUMANS AND DEMONS COEXIST IS GATEWAY CITY.
AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CITY'S AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT, I BEG OF YOU.

Princess Fire Dragon came to the human world seeking salt, and along with the Young Merchant she appeared in the Winter Kingdom.

The word "salary" comes from the Latin word for salt, or "sal." Some say the words origins lie in the ancient Roman practice of paying soldiers in salt. This could be proof the government controlled the distribution of salt. In ancient China, where the government had a monopoly on salt, or in the Roman Empire, where the price of salt was controlled, salt was an important source of revenue for nations throughout the world. In this manner, since ancient times salt has been monopolized by the ruling class and was long considered a symbol of wealth.

A MAGNIFICENT UNDERSTUDY

MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
CHAPTER 18
I HEARD THE NEWS!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
SLAM
HMMPH.
SHE'S NOT HERE?
WHY IS SHE MISSING AT THIS CRITICAL TIME?
LOOK キョロ
LOOK キョロ
I'M RIGHT HERE!
ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME?
JUMP
OH, MY.

Chapter 18 Archenemy and Hero
I Need You, Hero

LOOK.
THIS IS IT.
GLOW
THE SEAL OF THE DEMON QUEEN.
IT'S EVIDENCE I'M A CANDI-DATE FOR THE NEXT QUEEN.
THIS IS...
IT'S IN THE CLEAVAGE OF YOUR POINT-LESSLY LARGE BREASTS.
DON'T CALL THEM POINT-LESS!
SHRIEK
DO YOU TRULY IN-TEND TO BECOME THE DEMON QUEEN?
SURELY YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS, DON'T YOU?
OF COURSE.

THOSE WHO BECOME DEMON QUEENS ENTER THE PALACE OF THE UNDER-WORLD.
THE SOULS OF PAST DEMON KINGS AND QUEENS ARE SEALED INSIDE THE PALACE OF THE UNDER-WORLD...
...AND OFFER THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND POWER TO THE NEW KING.
IF YOU KNOW THIS, THEN WHY...
...THE NEW KING'S SOUL IS BASICALLY TAINTED BY THE PAST KINGS.
THOUGH IT SOUNDS NICE WHEN PHRASED THAT WAY...
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO SEE.

I WANT TO WATCH TWO WORLDS INTERACT...
AND...
...IF POSSIBLE, I'D LIKE TO MEET MY DESTINY.

FLASH!
WHAT IS THIS?
CLUNK
コト…
LOOK AT THIS.

GLOW
A HUMAN BOY?
YES.
HE WAS BORN LAST WEEK.
GLOW
!
COULD IT BE?
HE'S ONE OF TWO LIVING SINGULARI-TIES IN THIS WORLD.
HE IS THE "HERO."

WHAT?
THIS CHILD... THE HERO WILL COME TO KILL YOU!
YES.
I WANT TO MEET THIS PERSON.
HE'LL COME TO SEE ME.
IF I BECOME THE DEMON QUEEN, HE WILL COME EVENTU-ALLY.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
I MAY EVEN BE ABLE TO ASK HOW HE IS DOING.
SHOULD A MIRACLE OCCUR, I MIGHT EVEN BE ABLE TO TOUCH HIS BLACK HAIR.
THOUGH HE MAY KILL ME WITH HIS SWORD...
...I'LL AT LEAST BE ABLE TO SAY HELLO BEFORE I'M SLAIN.

I BELIEVE THAT IS MY ONLY CHANCE...
...TO SEE A FUTURE THAT'S NEVER BEEN SEEN.
A CHANCE TO READ A STORY NOT KEPT IN THIS LIBRARY.
A CHANCE TO MEET MY FATE.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT THE ROYAL CANDIDATE BATTLE?
URGH.

SIX POWERFUL DEMONS CHOSEN FROM ALL OVER THE SPIRIT WORLD WILL GATHER WITH THEIR FOLLOWERS.
IF YOU DON'T DEFEAT THEM, YOU CAN'T BECOME THE QUEEN.
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT THEM?

I'LL WORK SOME-THING OUT WITH THEM.
YOU KNOW...
RIGHT?
THAT'S NOT POS-SIBLE.
SO...
YOU'RE SO HARSH
GLOOM

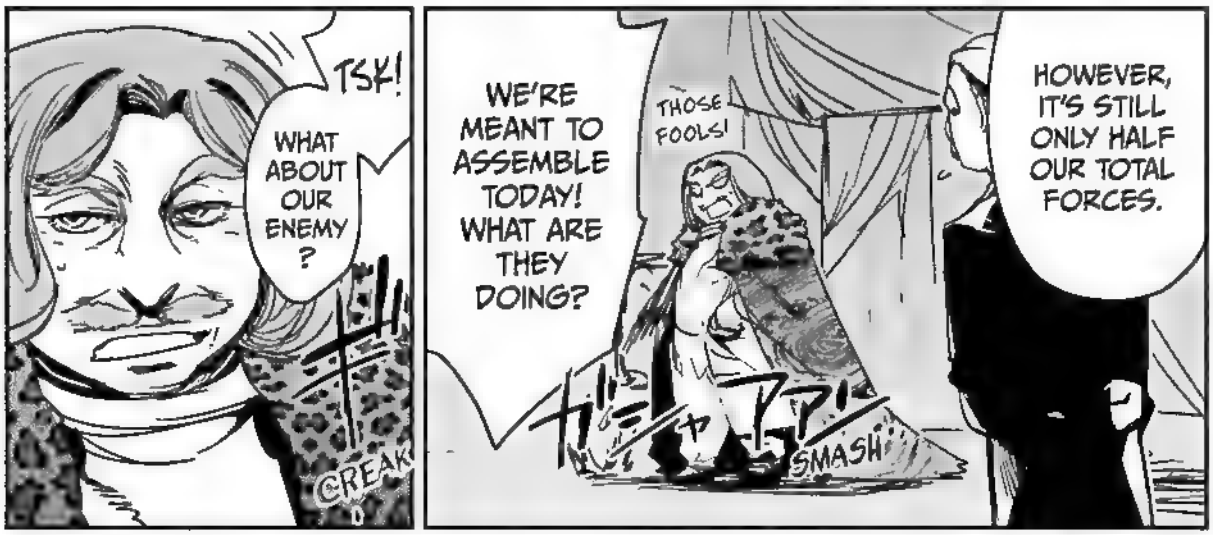
...I WILL SERVE YOU AS YOUR MAID.
MY MASTER.
WHAT?

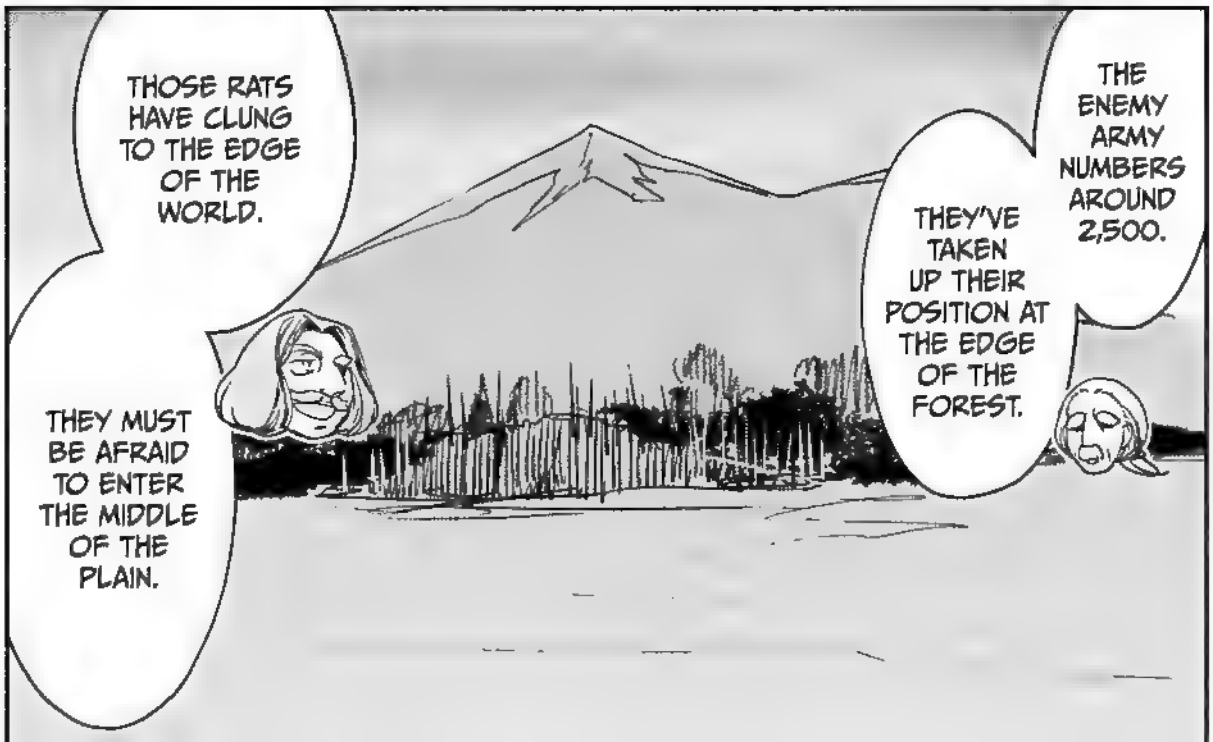
DON'T BE RIDICU-LOUS.
WHAT GOOD WILL ONE MORE MAID DO ME?
YOU THINK THAT BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH MAIDS.
EVERY BOOK I'VE READ SPEAKS HIGHLY OF THE SUPERI-OR HOUSE-KEEPING ABILITIES...
...BUSINESS ABILITY, AND COMBAT ABILITIES OF MAID.
REALLY ?
THIS IS ALSO MY DREAM.
I WISH TO MASTER THE "WAY OF THE MAID."
YOU ARE MY IDEAL MASTER.
WHAT?
I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A LAZY AND IRRE-SPONSIBLE PERSON.
STAB
YOU HAVE MUCH TO WORK WITH, BUT YOU WASTE YOUR TALENTS.
YOU TRULY ARE THE IDEAL MASTER.
GLOOM

OF COURSE.
YOU MAY BE RISKING YOUR LIFE.
ARE YOU REALLY SURE?
AFTER ALL...
...HOW COULD I NOT SUPPORT...
...YOUR DREAM TO WAIT FOR THE MAN YOU'RE DESTINED TO MEET?
I WAS BORN A WOMAN, TOO, YOU KNOW.

ELM KINGDOM NORTHERN PLAINS CENTRAL ALLIED FORCES MEETING LOCATION
SO COLD! IT'S SO TERRIBLY COLD!
BRING MORE FIRE-WOOD!
YES, SIR!

HOW DO THE OTHER CAMPS LOOK?
SIP
SIR!
THE SUPREME COMMANDER, THE BLUE ASH KING, HAS ARRIVED WITH GUARDSMEN AND AXE KNIGHTS IN TOW.
THE HEAVY INFANTRY OF THE MOUNTAIN KINGDOM AND ARCHERS OF THE TREETOP KINGDOM HAVE ARRIVED AS WELL.

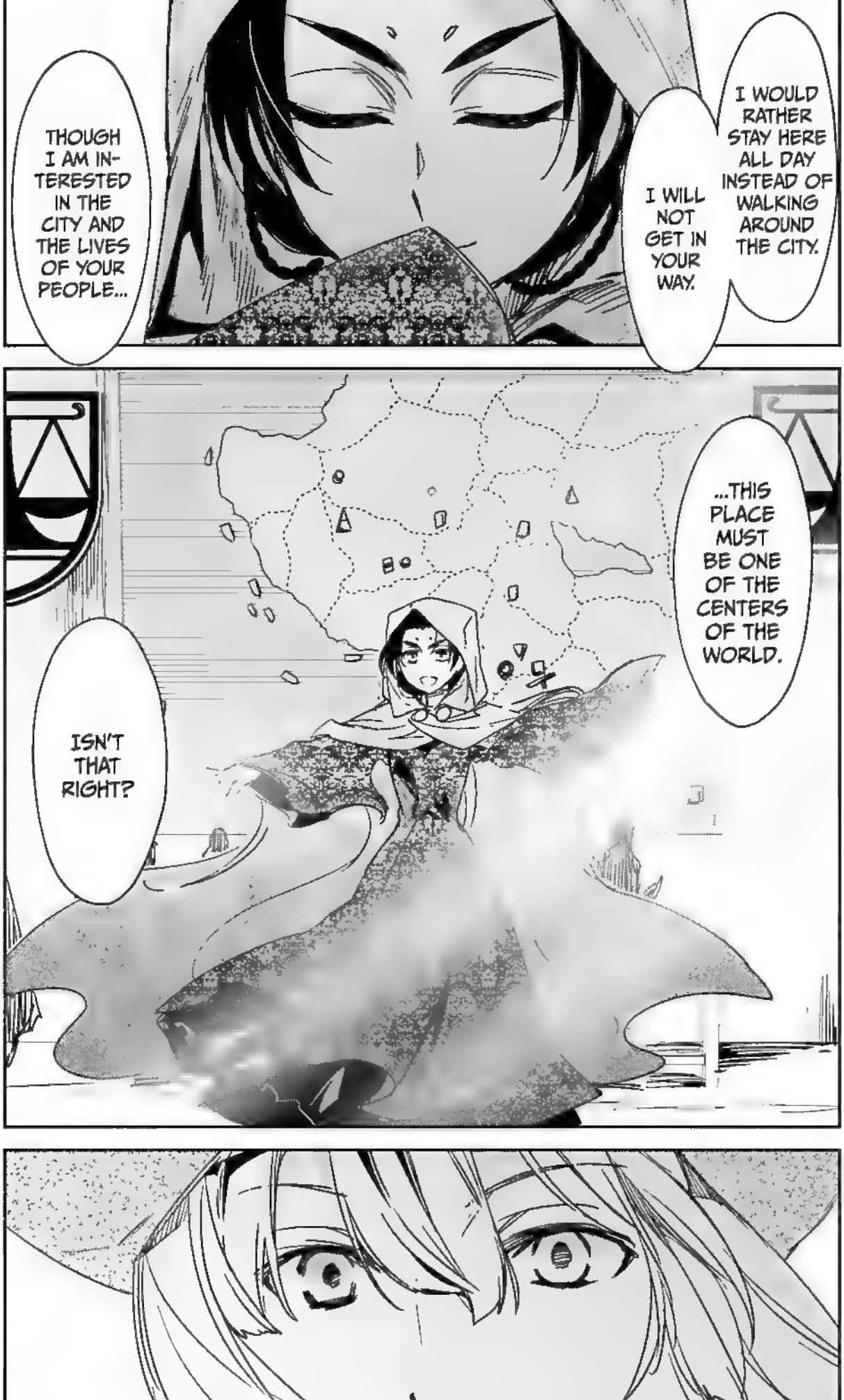

TSK!
WHAT ABOUT OUR ENEMY?
CREAK
WE'RE MEANT TO ASSEMBLE TODAY! WHAT ARE THEY DOING?
THOSE FOOLS!
SMASH
HOWEVER, IT'S STILL ONLY HALF OUR TOTAL FORCES.


THOSE RATS HAVE CLUNG TO THE EDGE OF THE WORLD.
THEY MUST BE AFRAID TO ENTER THE MIDDLE OF THE PLAIN.
THEY'VE TAKEN UP THEIR POSITION AT THE EDGE OF THE FOREST.
THE ENEMY ARMY NUMBERS AROUND 2,500.

IT'S THE ONLY THING A MAN WHO GROVELS KNOWS HOW TO DO!
AT LEAST HE RECOGNIZ-ES HIS NEW SUPERIORS!
COME TO THINK OF IT, WE RECEIVED A GIFT OF BARRELED LIQUOR FROM A LANDLORD IN THE AREA.
THERE ARE 20 BARRELS OF FINE ICE LIQUOR.
YES, SIR.
I WON'T BE ABLE TO DISTRACT MYSELF FROM THIS COLD WITHOUT DRINK.
THE WAR WON'T START FOR A WHILE ANYWAY.
VERY WELL. I'LL ACCEPT THEM.
ALL TOGETHER, MY FORCES NUMBER GREATER THAN THE SUPREME COMMAND-ER'S.
I WILL SURELY BE CELEBRATED WHEN WE WIN.
HE INCREASED HIS NUMBERS TO 400 JUST LIKE I ASKED.
I KNOW. THE MER-CENARY CAPTAIN...
SEND HIM A BARREL TOO.

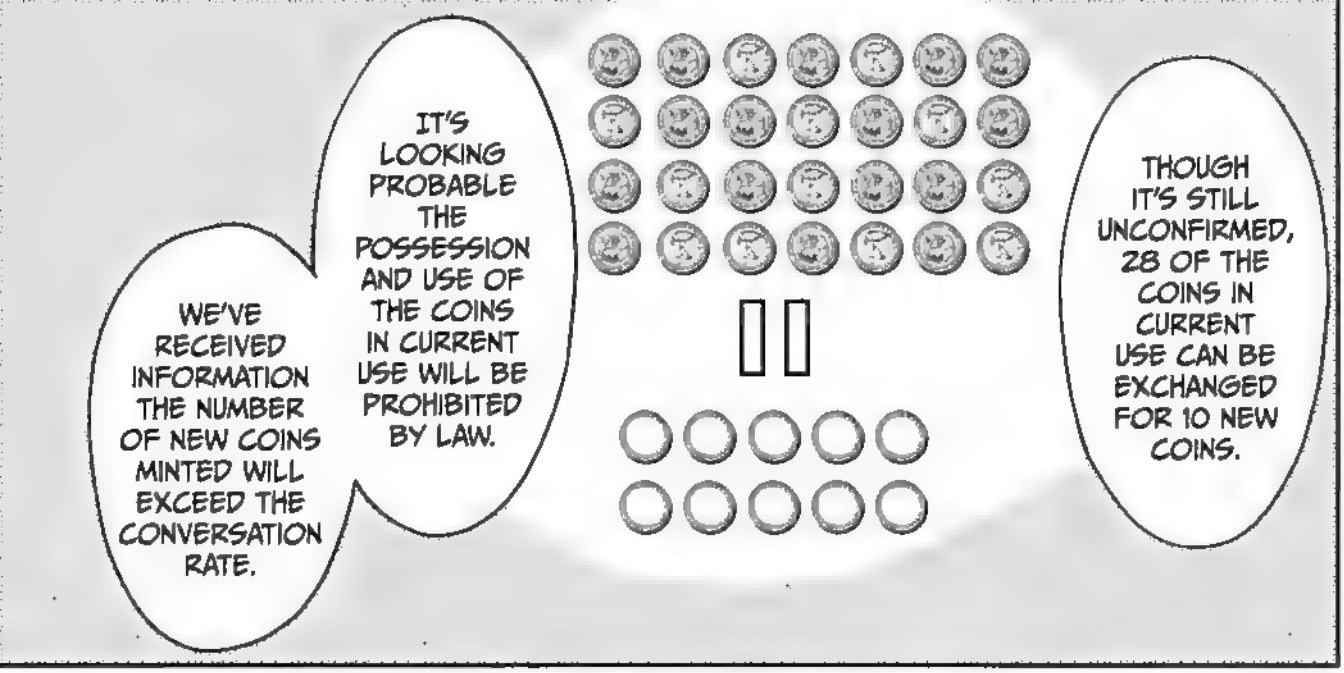
HA HA HA HA HA
REACH
PREPARE FOR SUPPER!
TONIGHT WE'LL CELE-BRATE OUR IM-PENDING VICTORY!
LAKE KINGDOM CAPITAL ALLIANCE HEADQUARTERS
GET IT! I DON'T CARE IF WE HAVE TO PAY DOUBLE!
A SHIP FULL OF COPPER HAS BEEN DIS-COVERED IN THE COPPER KINGDOM!
BUY IT! BE AGGRES-SIVE!
IT'S UP THREE POINTS!

DO YOU FIND THIS STRANGE?
YES.
WELL, WELL.
!
!!
!
WE PROMISED TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION.
YOU MAY LOOK ALL YOU LIKE, BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU WANTED TO COME HERE?
YOU HAVE TOLD ME MUCH ABOUT THE SPIRIT WORLD.
ISN'T THIS WHERE YOU WORK?
YES.
THAT LARGE MAP REPRESENTS THE HUMAN WORLD, DOESN'T IT?
NO, IT'S FINE.
IF YOU'D LIKE TO GO SIGHTSEEING AROUND THE CITY, I WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH AN ESCORT.


I WOULD RATHER STAY HERE ALL DAY INSTEAD OF WALKING AROUND THE CITY.
I WILL NOT GET IN YOUR WAY.
THOUGH I AM INTERESTED IN THE CITY AND THE LIVES OF YOUR PEOPLE...
...THIS PLACE MUST BE ONE OF THE CENTERS OF THE WORLD.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

YOU'RE RIGHT. THIS IS PART OF OUR DEAL.
THOUGH I MAY BE A TRAVELER FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY...
...I AM NOT A FOOL.
!
!
!
IT'S SLOWING DOWN.
THE MARKET PRICE OF WHEAT IS UP 165!
WE'RE MAKING PROGRESS!
WHAT ABOUT OUR PURCHASES IN THE TREETOP KINGDOM?
SIR, THESE ARE LAST NIGHT'S MOVEMENTS.
!
!
!

I BELIEVE IT'S HIS STRATEGY.
THOUGH THEY DID USE ROUNDABOUT METHODS, THE MERCHANTS OF THE WINTER KINGDOM PURCHASED A SIGNIFICANT QUANTITY OF ICE LIQUOR.
ARE THEY BEING ARROGANT, OR IS THIS THE LONELY WINTER KING'S STRATEGY?
THE CONQUERING ARMY IS STILL GATHERING. THEY SEEM TO BE BEHIND SCHEDULE.
THEIR MORALE IS LOW. THEY'RE HAVING TROUBLE ENFORCING DISCIPLINE.
DASH
!
CHATTER
THE HOLY KINGDOM IS PLANNING TO MINT COINS AGAIN WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH!
SIR, IT'S AN EMERGENCY!
SLAM


IT'S LOOKING PROBABLE THE POSSESSION AND USE OF THE COINS IN CURRENT USE WILL BE PROHIBITED BY LAW.
WE'VE RECEIVED INFORMATION THE NUMBER OF NEW COINS MINTED WILL EXCEED THE CONVERSATION RATE.
THOUGH IT'S STILL UNCONFIRMED, 28 OF THE COINS IN CURRENT USE CAN BE EXCHANGED FOR 10 NEW COINS.

AT FACE VALUE, THE NEW COINS WILL BE WORTH 2.8 TIMES THE VALUE OF THE COINS IN CURRENT USE.
I'LL ACKNOWL-EDGE THEY'RE PUTTING A LOT OF ENERGY INTO THIS.
WHAT AN INTELLIGENT MOVE.

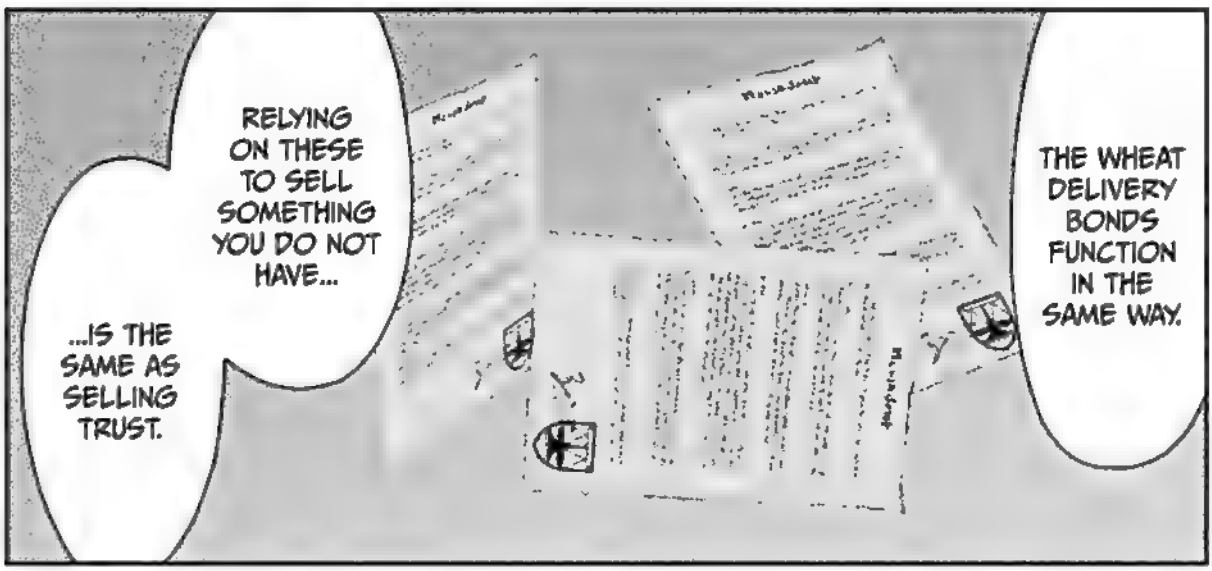
FROM TRUST.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?
THIS ADDI-TIONAL VALUE...

THE VALUE OF COINS IS INCREAS-ING?

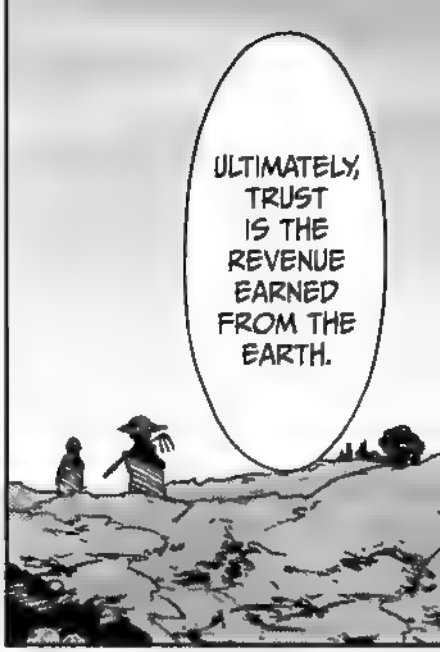
THEIR TRUST FOR THE KINGDOM MINTING THE COINS AND THE CHURCH SUPPORTING IT GUARANTEES THE VALUE OF THE COIN.
ACTUALLY, CAN THEY GUARANTEE THAT?
DO THEY TRULY UNDER-STAND...
...WHERE THAT TRUST COMES FROM?

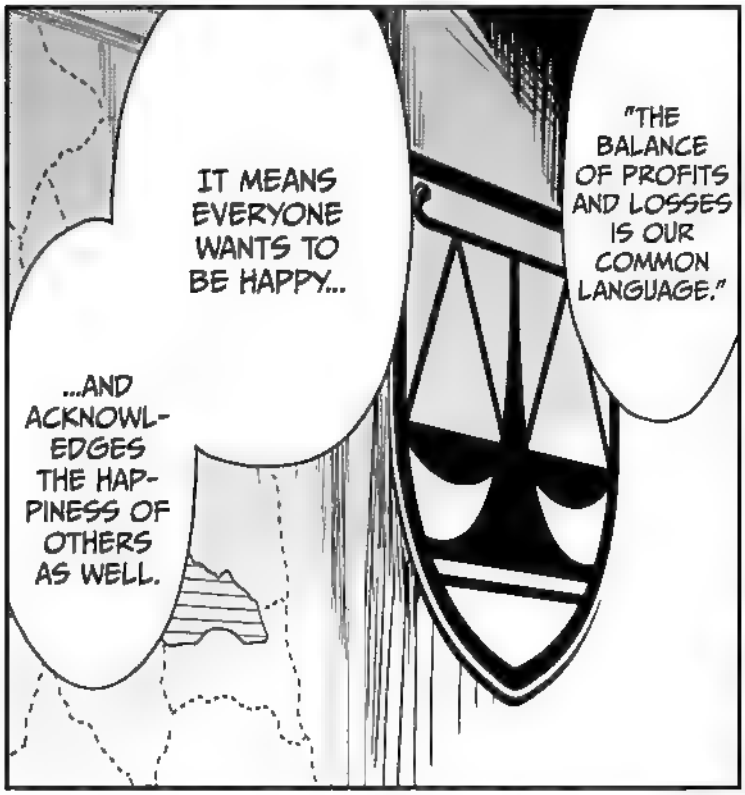
DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA.
THERE IS NO TRUST AMONG ROYALTY, NOBILITY, LANDOWNERS, AND THE CHURCH.


THE WHEAT DELIVERY BONDS FUNCTION IN THE SAME WAY.
RELYING ON THESE TO SELL SOMETHING YOU DO NOT HAVE...
...IS THE SAME AS SELLING TRUST.

EARTH...
THE GIFTS OF THE EARTH.
THE SOURCE OF TRUST IS THE "EARTH."
MINING ROCKS, BURNING CHARCOAL ...
...FORGING IRON, BAKING BREAD, AND RAISING LIVESTOCK.
THE ABILITY TO HARVEST WHEAT FROM THE EARTH.
NOT FREEZING TRANSAC-TIONS.
GIVING THOSE PROD-UCTS TO ANOTHER PERSON.
IN OTHER WORDS, THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE WHAT YOU DESIRE.

YOU COULDN'T CALL THAT BUSINESS.
YOU MAY SEIZE SOMEONE'S TRUST, BUT YOU CANNOT GROW MORE.


ULTIMATELY, TRUST IS THE REVENUE EARNED FROM THE EARTH.


"THE BALANCE OF PROFITS AND LOSSES IS OUR COMMON LANGUAGE."
IT MEANS EVERYONE WANTS TO BE HAPPY...
...AND ACKNOWL-EDGES THE HAP-PINESS OF OTHERS AS WELL.

THEY'RE NOT MER-CHANTS.
YES.

COME.
LET US DO WHAT MERCHANTS MUST DO.
TIE
UP

I WILL JOIN YOU.
PRIN-CESS.
WE'RE GOING TO THE WINTER KINGDOM.
STEP

WE'LL NEED SOME ENGI-NEERS TOO.
...WHICH MEANS WE NEED FOOT SOLDIERS OVER KNIGHTS.
WE'LL SET UP IN A STRONG DEFENSIVE POSITION...
OUR SPEARMEN WILL BE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT.
WE'LL NEED COLD WEATHER CLOTHES AS WELL.
WINTER KINGDOM ROYAL PALACE STRATEGY ROOM

WHAT ABOUT THE FRONT LINES?
THEY'RE A COMPANY FOCUSED AROUND HEAVY INFANTRY.
NATURALLY, I'VE COMMANDED THEM NOT TO ATTACK.

AHA HA
HOW LUCKY FOR US.

THE ENEMY FORCES SEEM TO BE ASSEM-BLING SLOWLY.
GLANCE
THOUGH WE DON'T KNOW WHY.

LEAVE IT TO ME, HERO.
I'LL AVOID HURTING ANYONE I CAN.

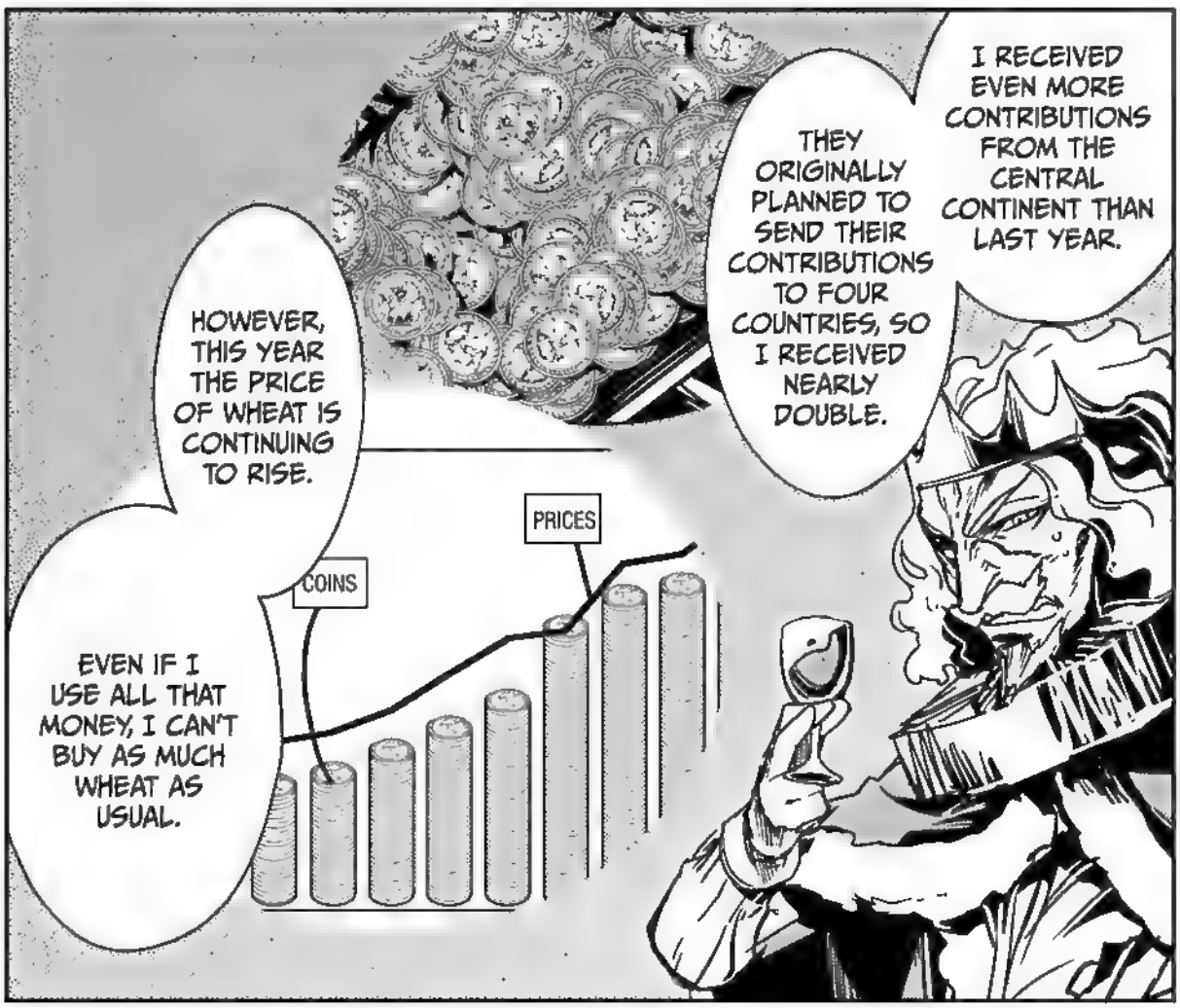
THIS IS ALL WE CAN DO.
I'M LEAVING TODAY AS WELL.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU
IF I HAVE TO, I'LL TAKE OFF THEIR HEADS WITHOUT INJURING A SINGLE PERSON!
YOUR SWORD CAN BE DANGEROUS, THOUGH.
A WARRIOR'S SWORD AND HORSE SHOULD BE A LITTLE FEROCIOUS.
YES, SIR!
PROVIDE SUPPORT TO THE GENERAL.
COMMANDER. ONCE YOU GET THE GOODS TOGETHER, BRING UP THE REAR AND MEET UP WITH OUR FORCES WITH YOUR SUPPLIES.
THE HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IS THE ONLY ARMY THAT EVEN COMES CLOSE IN SIZE.
THE CONQUERING ARMY'S NUMBERS ARE APPROACHING 20,000.
WE HAVE ONLY AROUND 4,500.

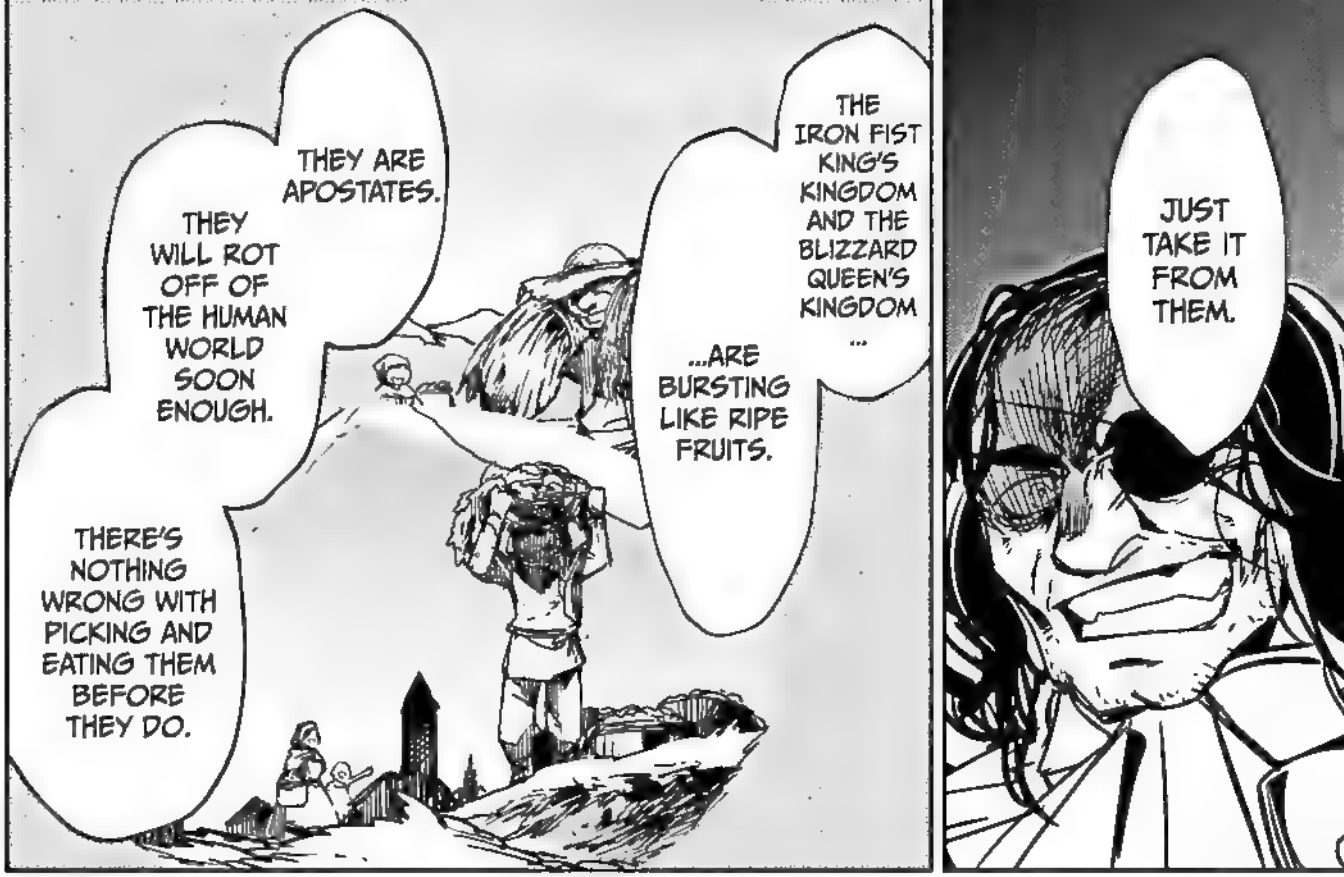
I'LL KILL YOU
AHA HA HA
EITHER WAY, COMMAND OF THE ARMY...
...IS BEST LEFT IN THE HANDS OF THE FLAT-CHESTED GENERAL INSTEAD OF THE HERO.
THAT'S RIGHT ...
HUH?
PFFT!
HA HA!
HA HA!
HA

ALL RIGHT.
I'LL LEAVE THE BATTLE TO YOU.
IF IT COMES TO IT, I'LL COME RUNNING.
YEAH!
LEAVE IT TO US! WE'RE READY TO GO!
MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM ROYAL PALACE
WHY?
WHY WON'T THEY SURREN-DER?
WHY ARE THEY ALIVE?
APOSTATES! HERETICS! REBELS!
CHUCKLE
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?
HA HA HA

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT THE ONE WHO'S AT WIT'S END...
...MIDNIGHT SUN KING?
HMMPH!
CHUCKLE
WHAT POINT IS THERE IN TELLING A PIG HE'S A PIG?
THIS WON'T END UNTIL YOU KILL THEM.
IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE DEMONS, OF COURSE!
HA HA HA


I RECEIVED EVEN MORE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE CENTRAL CONTINENT THAN LAST YEAR.
THEY ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO SEND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FOUR COUNTRIES, SO I RECEIVED NEARLY DOUBLE.
HOWEVER, THIS YEAR THE PRICE OF WHEAT IS CONTINUING TO RISE.
EVEN IF I USE ALL THAT MONEY, I CAN'T BUY AS MUCH WHEAT AS USUAL.
PRICES
COINS

THEY'RE JUST PREACHING THESE SUBJECTS TO DECEIVE THE FOOLS.
DAY AND NIGHT, THE SERFS CROSS THE BORDER INTO THE IRON KINGDOM.
ON TOP OF THAT, THERE'S THIS AGGRAVATING PROCLAMATION!
EMANCIPATING THE SERFS? I CAN'T DO THAT!
RIP
RIP
RIP
HEY, MIDNIGHT SUN KING.
WHAT NEED IS THERE TO WORRY?
CHUCKLE
THE LONELY WINTER KING... WHY DO THE PEOPLE SUPPORT ONLY HIM?
WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT THEIR ALLIANCE?
AT THIS RATE, THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM... ONLY MY MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM WILL BE...

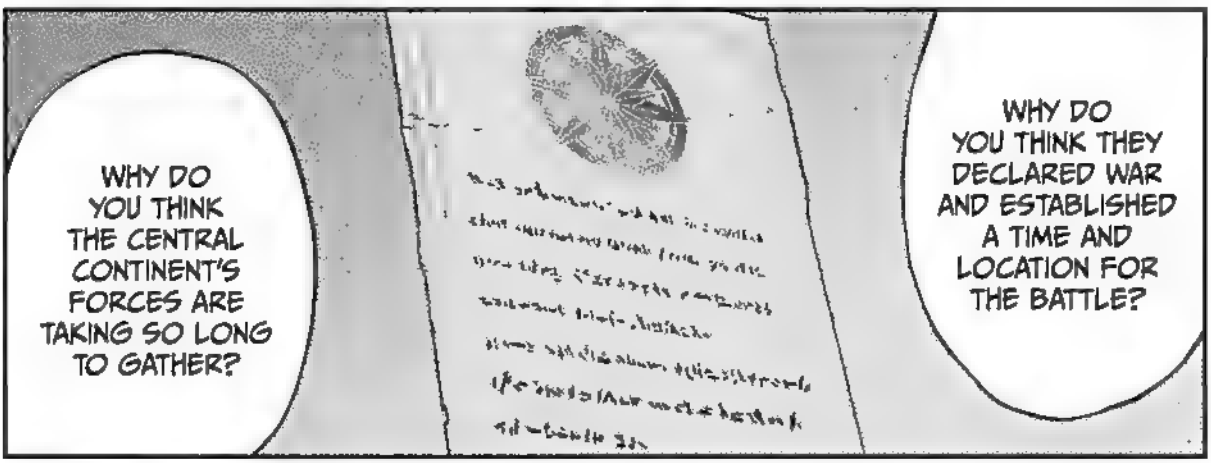

THEY ARE APOSTATES.
THEY WILL ROT OFF OF THE HUMAN WORLD SOON ENOUGH.
THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH PICKING AND EATING THEM BEFORE THEY DO.
THE IRON FIST KING'S KINGDOM AND THE BLIZZARD QUEEN'S KINGDOM ...
...ARE BURSTING LIKE RIPE FRUITS.
JUST TAKE IT FROM THEM.

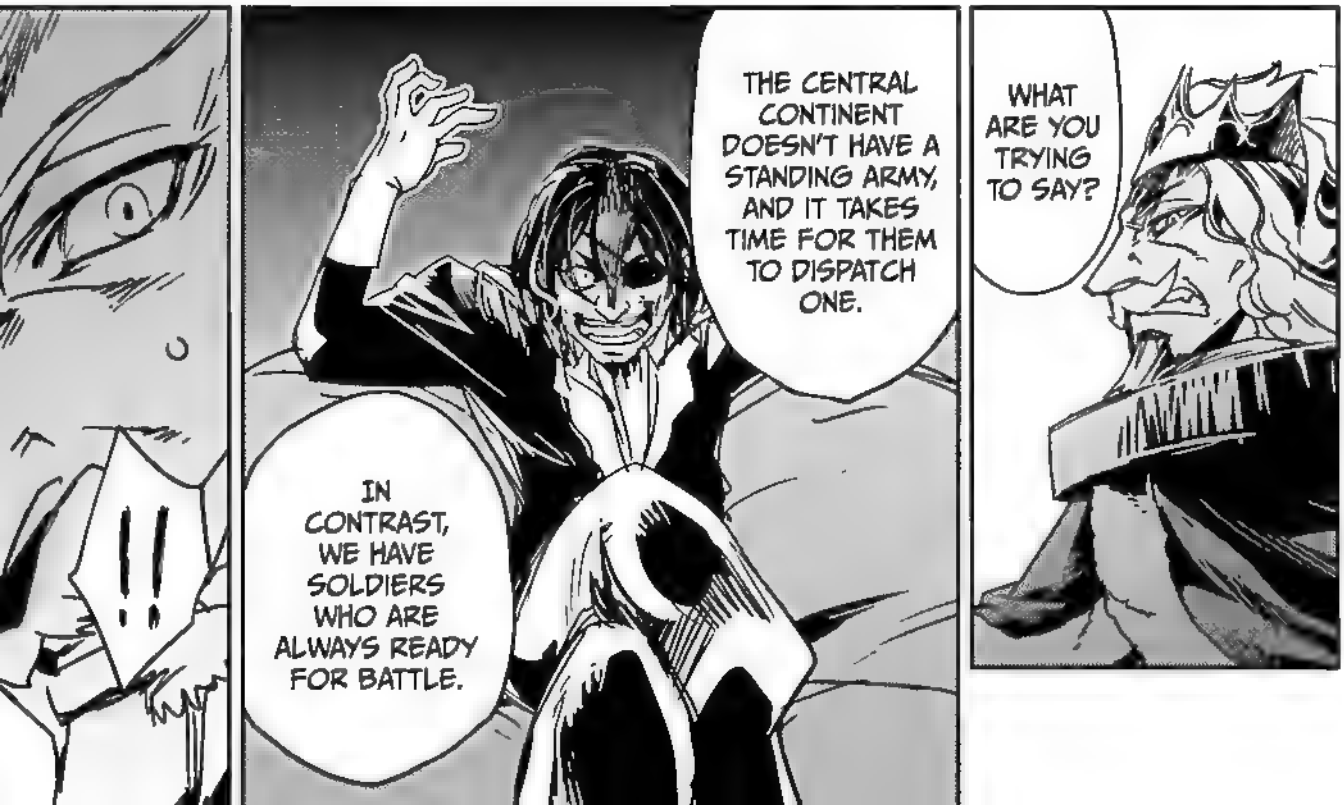
BUT I LOST MOST OF MY FORCES AT AURORA ISLAND.
THOUGH THEY'VE TRAINED FOR A YEAR, THEIR TRAINING MAY STILL BE INFERIOR TO THAT OF THE FORCES OF THE OTHER SOUTHERN KINGDOMS.

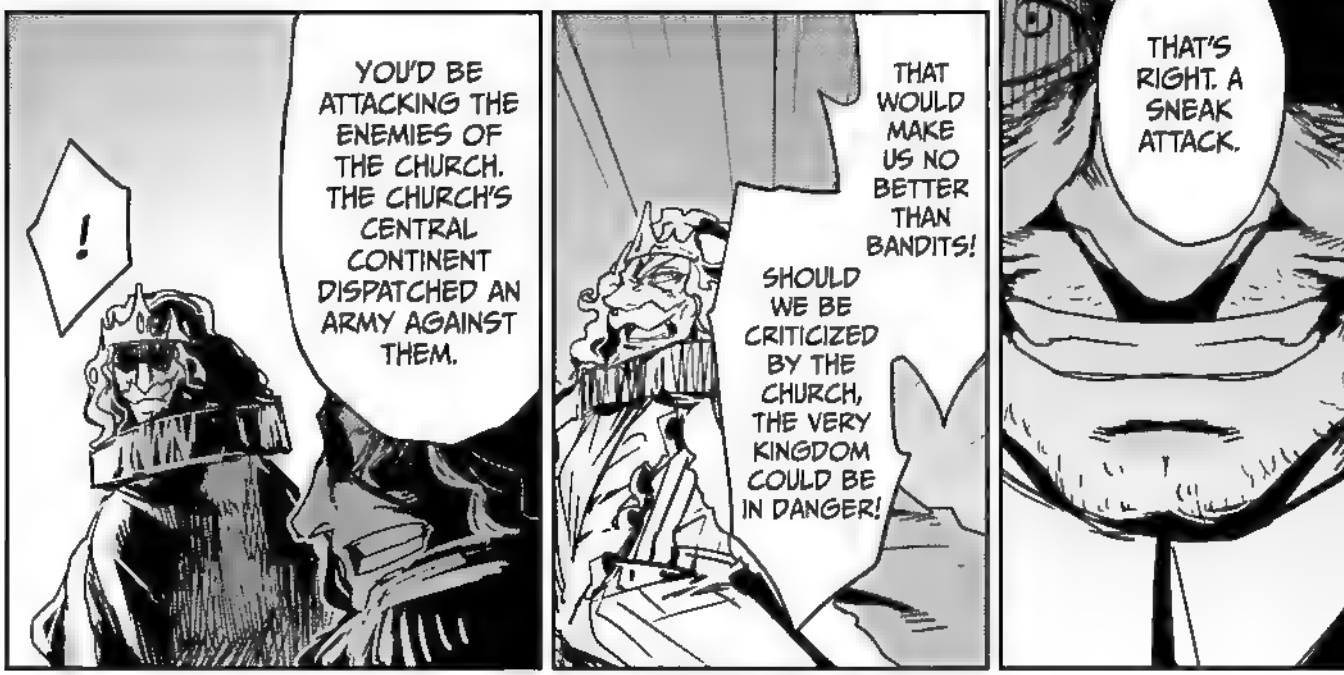
CAN I DO THAT?

WHAT DOES THIS KINGDOM HAVE?
YOU SAID YOURSELF IT HAS THE MOST EXPERIENCED STANDING ARMY IN THE WORLD.
CHUCKLE

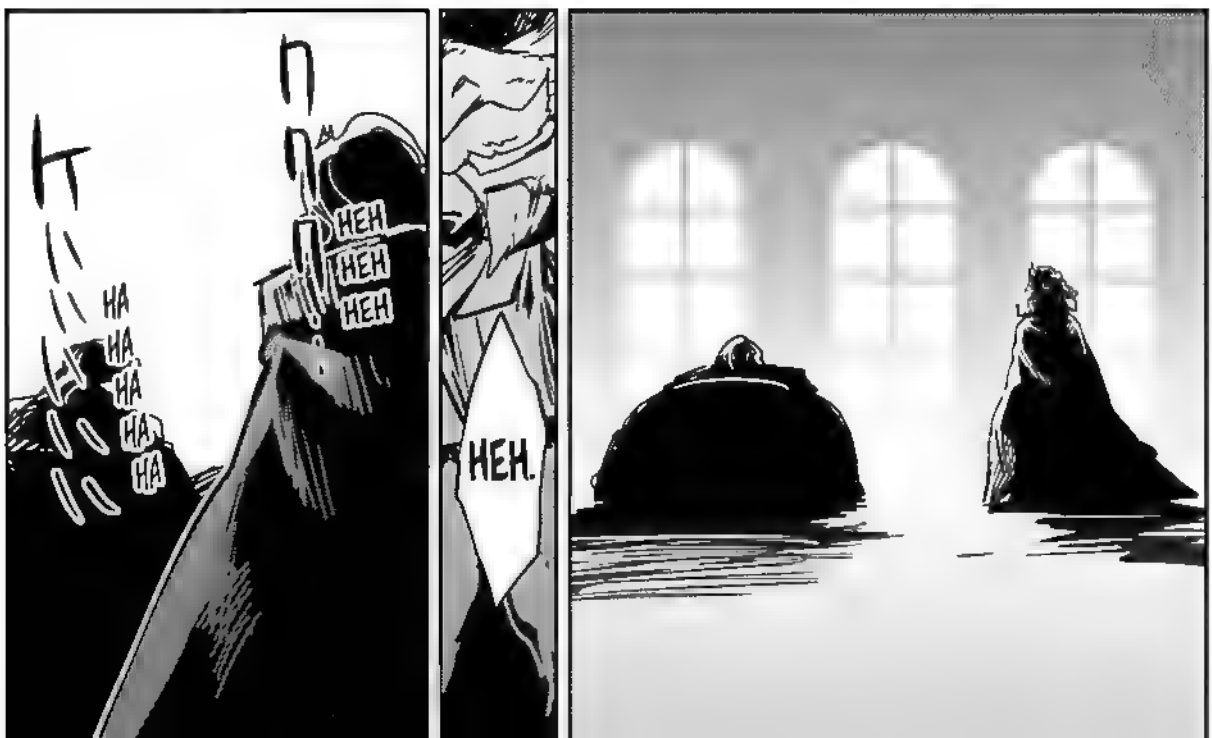
THE STRENGTH OF A STANDING ARMY?
YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND THE STRENGTH OF A STANDING ARMY.
WHAT ?
HA HA HA HA! YOU, THE CENTRAL CONTINENT...
...AND THE LONELY WINTER BRAT DON'T UNDERSTAND!


WHY DO YOU THINK THE CENTRAL CONTINENT'S FORCES ARE TAKING SO LONG TO GATHER?
WHY DO YOU THINK THEY DECLARED WAR AND ESTABLISHED A TIME AND LOCATION FOR THE BATTLE?


!!
IN CONTRAST, WE HAVE SOLDIERS WHO ARE ALWAYS READY FOR BATTLE.
THE CENTRAL CONTINENT DOESN'T HAVE A STANDING ARMY, AND IT TAKES TIME FOR THEM TO DISPATCH ONE.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

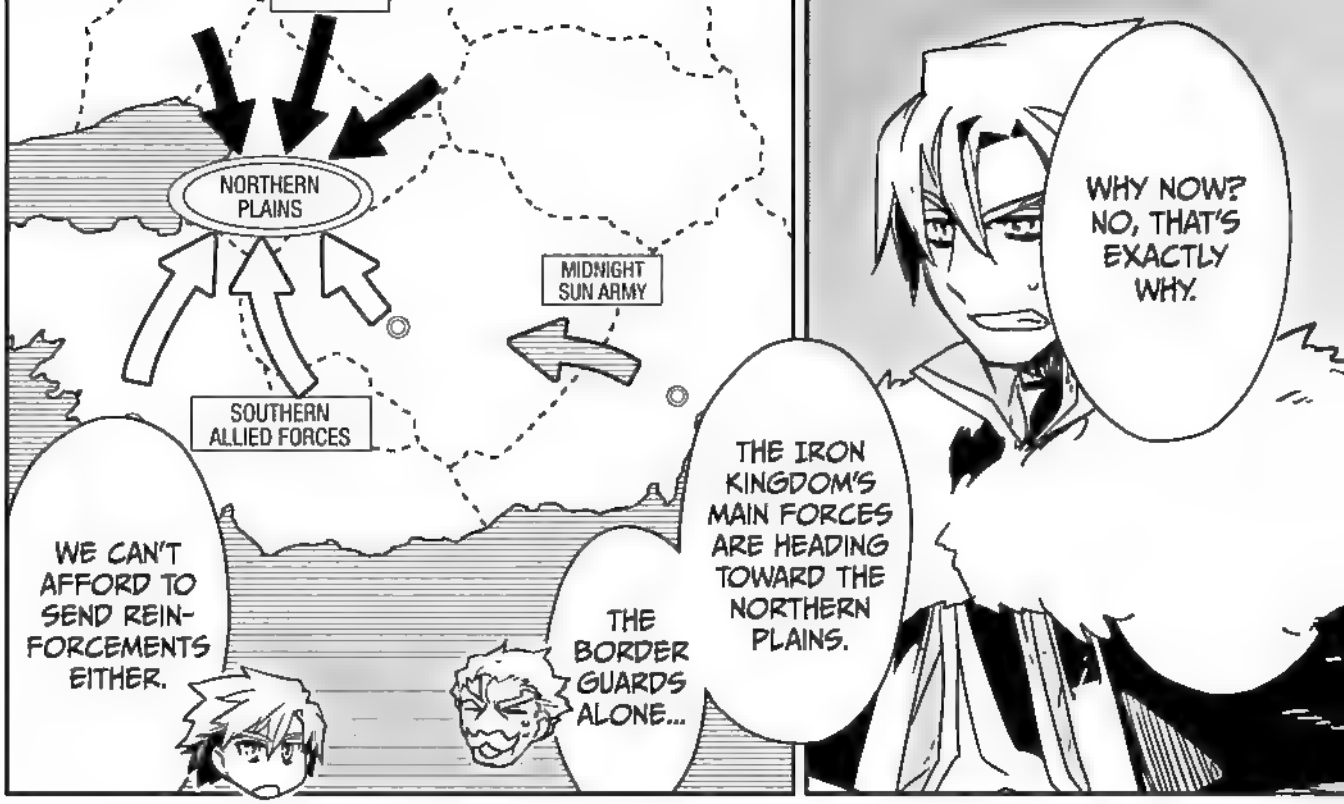

!
YOU'D BE ATTACKING THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH. THE CHURCH'S CENTRAL CONTINENT DISPATCHED AN ARMY AGAINST THEM.
THAT WOULD MAKE US NO BETTER THAN BANDITS!
SHOULD WE BE CRITICIZED BY THE CHURCH, THE VERY KINGDOM COULD BE IN DANGER!
THAT'S RIGHT. A SNEAK ATTACK.

BURN FARMS AND HOMES AND DEFEAT THE IRON KINGDOM IN A SINGLE STROKE.
ONCE THEIR DEFENSES ARE DIVIDED, SEND YOUR CAVALRY TO ATTACK.
PAY THE BANDITS ON THE BORDER TO LAY WASTE TO THE IRON KINGDOM.
BANDITS? BRING IT ON!


HA HA HA HA HA
HEH HEH HEH
HEH.

HA HA HA HA HA!
HA HA HA
I WILL BRING THE DARKNESS OF MY EYE DOWN ON THE IRON KINGDOM!
LEAVE IT TO ME!
CHUCKLE
IT'S MY ONLY CHOICE.
I WILL GRANT YOU SOLDIERS.

!
TWO THOUSAND SOLDIERS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM'S ARMY ARE ATTACKING THE IRON KINGDOM!
THEY'RE CROSSING THE BORDER AND INVADING!
WHAT IS IT?
A MESSAGE!
I BRING A MESSAGE!


NORTHERN PLAINS
MIDNIGHT SUN ARMY
SOUTHERN ALLIED FORCES
WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SEND REINFORCEMENTS EITHER.
THE BORDER GUARDS ALONE...
THE IRON KINGDOM'S MAIN FORCES ARE HEADING TOWARD THE NORTHERN PLAINS.
WHY NOW? NO, THAT'S EXACTLY WHY.

WE ALREADY RECEIVED A REPORT ON THE MOVEMENTS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN ARMY.
A MESSAGE!
I BRING A MESSAGE!

WINTER KINGDOM
AURORA ISLAND
THE FROZEN SEA
DEMON ARMY
!!
...DEMONS ARE APPROACHING! AT LEAST 1,500 OF THEM HAVE CROSSED THE GATE AND HAVE INVADED!
IT'S NOT THAT! FROM THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN...

GRIND
WHAT IS SHE DOING? DID SOME-THING HAPPEN?
THE TIMING COULDN'T BE WORSE.
HOW COULD THIS HAP-PEN?
I'M SORRY. WE CAN'T DIVIDE OUR FORCES ANY FURTHER.
HERO.
I'LL HANDLE THE DEMONS.
LONELY WINTER KING.
WOULD YOU BE DISGUSTED IF I TOLD YOU I DIDN'T WANT TO FIGHT THE DEMONS?

HERO.
....

I KNOW YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO DEAL WITH, BUT I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO HANDLE IT.
SORRY ABOUT THE WEIRD QUESTION.

WHY WOULD THE HERO ASK THAT?

!!!
WHOOSH

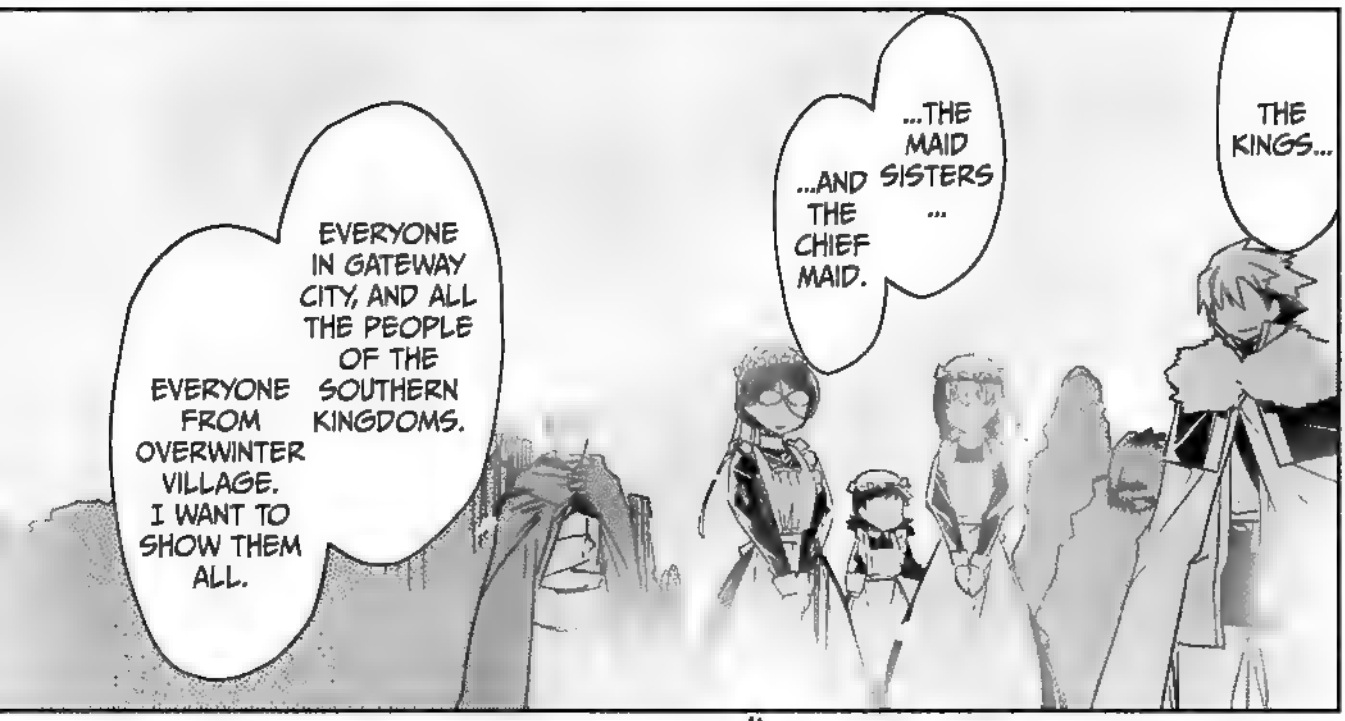
INFORM THE FEMALE KNIGHT ON THE FRONT LINES!
HURRY!
YES, SIR!
WE HAVE A MOUNTAIN OF THINGS TO DO AND PROBLEMS TO SOLVE!
GET IN TOUCH WITH THE IRON KINGDOM!
FLYING MAGIC!
SWOOSH
WHOOSH
ARE THEY AROUND HERE?
WHERE ARE THE DEMONS?
THE ANTARCTIC OCEAN NEAR THE GATE
WHOOSH

I'M SORRY, DEMON QUEEN.
DAMN IT!
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

AS LONG AS YOU GO BEYOND THE HILL WITH ME, I WILL BE SATISFIED.

THOSE THINGS...
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL, HUH?
SOME-THING YOU'VE NEVER SEEN?

I WANT TO SEE THOSE THINGS TOO!
YOU...
...AND ME.
THE FEMALE KNIGHT...
...THE OLD MAN...
...AND THE FEMALE MAGI-CIAN.


THE KINGS...
...THE MAID SISTERS ...
...AND THE CHIEF MAID.
EVERYONE IN GATEWAY CITY, AND ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOMS.
EVERYONE FROM OVERWINTER VILLAGE. I WANT TO SHOW THEM ALL.

EVEN THE PEOPLE OF THE CENTRAL CONTINENT...
ROAR
...AND THE DEMONS!
FLASH

BLUE SKIN... THE BLUE DEMONS!

VERY WELL.

THEY'RE PREPARED FOR LONG DISTANCE INVASION. THEY EVEN HAVE FOOD SUPPLIES. I SHOULD GO AFTER THOSE TO MAKE THEM RETREAT.

ROAR

ROAR

BLUE SKIN... THE BLUE DEMONS!
VERY WELL.
THEY'RE PREPARED FOR LONG DISTANCE INVASION. THEY EVEN HAVE FOOD SUPPLIES. I SHOULD GO AFTER THOSE TO MAKE THEM RETREAT.

WHOOSH
DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE ME.
INCLUDING ME IS...
... SLIGHTLY GREAT.
YOU!
ROAR

FEMALE
MAGICIAN

WAITING.
WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN UNTIL NOW?

JUST KID-DING.
THE LIBRA-RY.
?

I COULDN'T GET THERE NO MATTER WHAT I TRIED.
THE OUTER LIBRARY?

ONLY A CERTAIN CLAN CAN ENTER THAT PLACE.

POINT
THOSE ...
DO YOU STILL WANT TO KILL THEM?
NO.
I JUST WANT TO STOP THEM.

?
CLOSE YOUR EYES.
EEK!
TOUCH
!
COM-MUNI-CATION MAGIC, HUH?
GLOW
I CREATED COMMU-NICATION LINES.
WHAT ...
WHAT DID YOU ...
WITHDRAW

WHOOSH
HEY!
SWISH
GO, HERO.
I WILL HANDLE THEM.
MARCH
MARCH
SWOOSH
?
YOU KNOW WHO SHE IS?
ROAR
THE DEMON QUEEN IS WAITING.
WHOOSH

SHE'S WAITING.
ONCE I FINISH THEM OFF...
...DESTROY THE GATE WITH YOUR MOST POWERFUL SPELL.
IF I DO THAT, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GO TO THE SPIRIT WORLD ANYMORE!
YOU WANT ME TO DESTROY IT, RIGHT?

HOW BADLY DO YOU WANT TO DESTROY IT?
AS MUCH AS POS-SIBLE.
I CAN'T GUARANTEE HOW BADLY IT'LL BE DESTROYED!
WHY WOULD YOU...

THE END

CHAPTER 18
I Need You, Hero

BLIP
CALCULATING DISTANCE.
AIM FIXED.
THERE ARE 2,670 DEMONS TOTAL.
DECOMPRESSING COMPRESSED SPELLS.
FIFTEEN PERCENT DECOMPRESSED.
HUMMM
MAOYU
Archenemy and Hero
CHAPTER 19

FIFTY-NINE PERCENT.
EIGHTY-ONE PERCENT.
ROAR
THIRTY-SEVEN PERCENT.

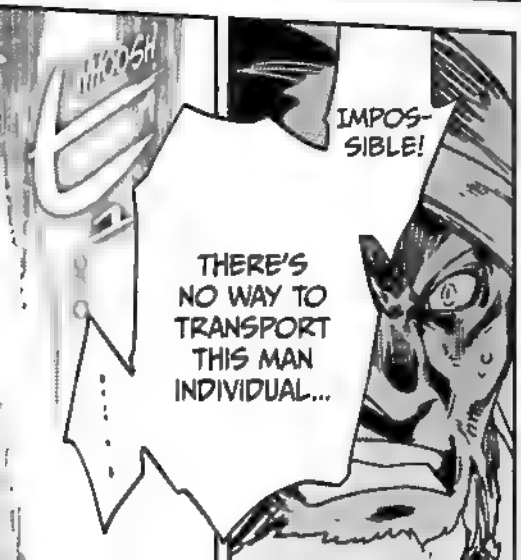
DESIG-
NATED
RANGE'S
CURRENT
AREA.
CONFLICT
RESOLVED.
GRIT
WHOOSH

I RE-PEATEDLY COM-PRESSED AND EVEN EXTENDED TIME TO STORE THESE SPELLS!
RUMBLE
TO SAVE...
ROAR
...THE HERO!
I DON'T HAVE...
WHOOSH
...TIME FOR YOU!
FLASH

THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
WHOOSH
SWISH
WHOOSH
SWISH
WHOOSH
VANISH!
IMPOS-SIBLE!
THERE'S NO WAY TO TRANSPORT THIS MAN INDIVIDUAL...
THIS IS... DISPLACE-MENT?
I DON'T KNOW!
WHAT IS THIS?

VANISH!!
THUD
THUD
WHOOSH
SWISH
WHOOSH
WHAT IS THIS?

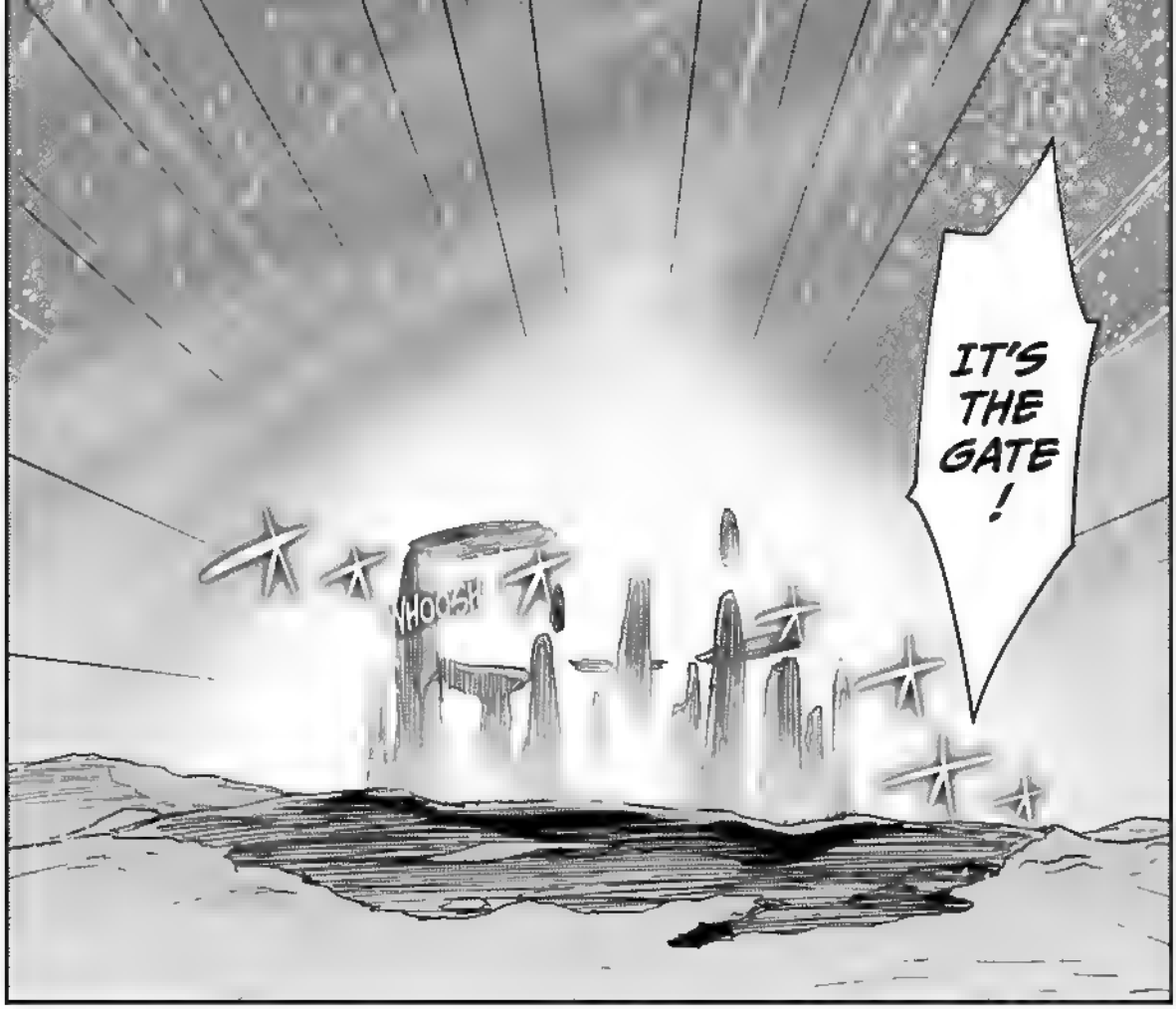
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
THUD
WHOOSH
SWISH
WHOOSH
SWISH
SWISH


WHOOSH
IMPOS-
SIBLE!
THERE'S NO WAY TO TRANSPORT THIS MAN INDIVIDUAL...

THIS IS... DISPLACE-MENT?
...
WHOOSH

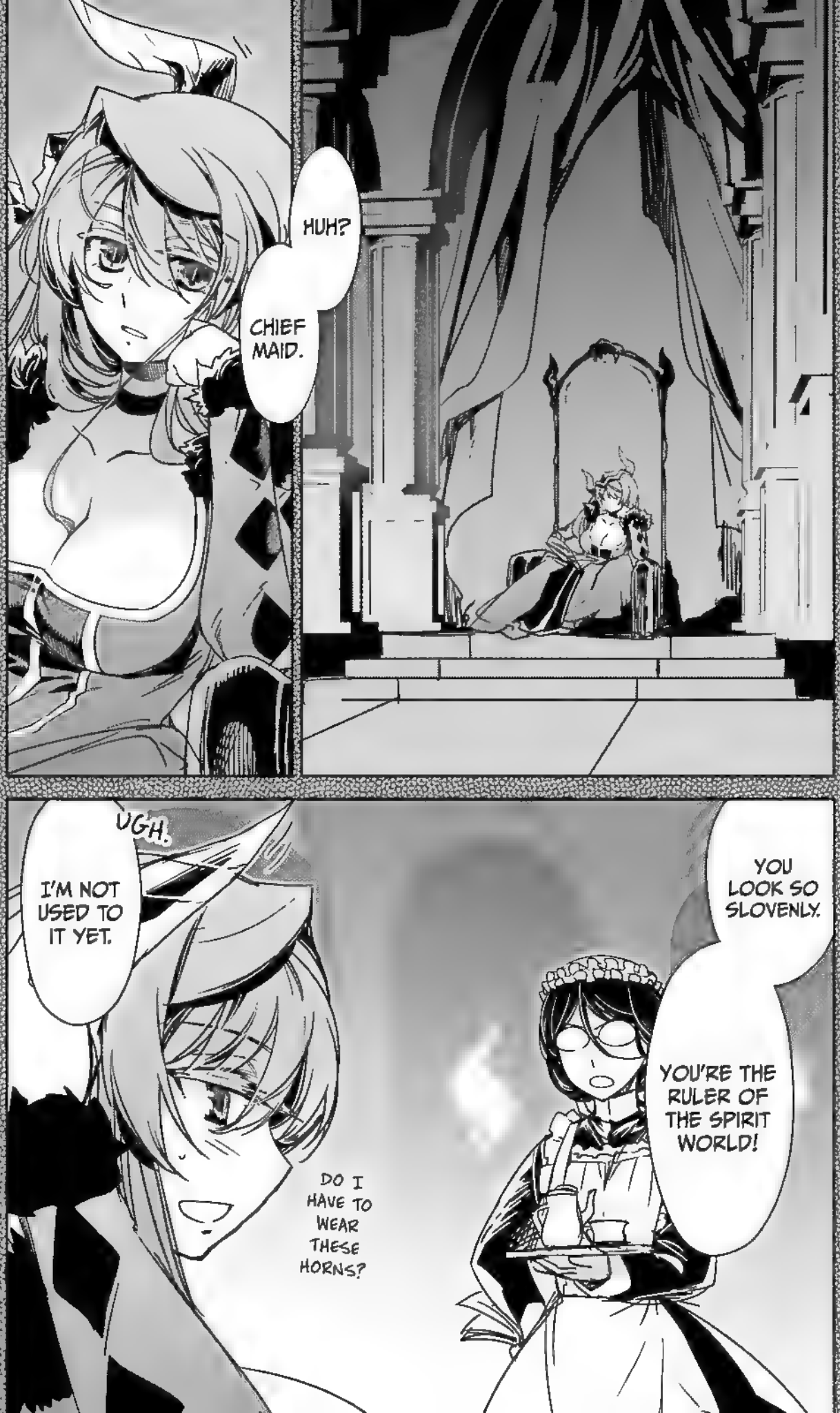
I DON'T KNOW!

WHOOSH
RE-MOVAL COM-PLETE.
GO.
GOT IT.
YOUR METHODS HAVE BECOME EVEN MORE EXTREME.
WHOOSH
WHOOSH
I SEE IT.
WHOOSH



CHAPTER 19 Archenemy and Hero

Because I am a Merchant


HUH?
CHIEF MAID.
UGH.
I'M NOT USED TO IT YET.
DO I HAVE TO WEAR THESE HORNS?
YOU LOOK SO SLOVENLY.
YOU'RE THE RULER OF THE SPIRIT WORLD!

GOOD.
THIS DEMON MADE PAPER IS SATISFACTORY.
THANK YOU.
I BROUGHT TEA AND REPORTS.
HERE YOU ARE.
CLINK
I'M GOING TO HAVE DEMONS RECORD WARS.
STEP
STEP
...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?
THAT THING YOU HAD THE FOREST SPIRITS MAKE?
APPROXIMATE RESOURCES PREPARED.
EXPENSES AND PARTICIPATING OFFICERS.
THE NUMBERS AND LOSSES OF ENEMIES AND ALLIES.
THE OUTCOME, LOCATION ...
...AND TIME.

I HAVE SEVERAL GOALS.
THE FIRST IT TO HAVE THEM GROW ACCUSTOMED TO KEEPING RECORDS.
I BELIEVE IT WILL IMPROVE THE LITERACY RATE IN THE LONG TERM.
BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY...
...I WANT THEM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT WE'RE DOING.
THE SPIRIT WORLD IS TORN BY WAR BETWEEN VARIOUS CLANS AND TRIBES.
I DON'T MEAN TO REJECT WAR ENTIRELY...
...BUT I CAN'T HAVE THEM CONFUSING TRULY NECESSARY WARS WITH THOSE WAGED OUT OF MOODS OR SPITE.
I WANT THEM TO CONSIDER ...
...WHETHER OR NOT THE EFFECTS OF THEIR ACTIONS ARE WORTH THE PRICE THEY PAID.
YOU'RE A PATIENT QUEEN.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE? I ACQUIRED NEW IMAGES.
THE HERO?
I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME UNTIL THE HERO ARRIVES, SO I'D LIKE TO HURRY, THOUGH.
HE'S SO CUTE.
HE CAN ALREADY STAND NOW.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?

THE SEAL ON THE GATE HAS BEEN BROKEN?
STEP

AFTER THE SEAL ON THE GATE WAS BROKEN, ROUGHLY 1,500 HUMAN SOLDIERS INVADED.
"THE FIRST HOLY KEY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE."
CALLING THEMSELVES THAT, THEY DEMAND THE DEMONS IN THE AREA SURRENDER TO THEM.

SEND AN ENVOY TO THE GATE IMMEDIATELY.
WE MUST CONFIRM THE INTENTIONS OF THIS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.
CONTACT THE DEMON CLANS AS WELL!
YES, MA'AM!

WHY?
I PLACED A SEAL ON THE GATE TO BE SAFE AND PROHIBITED DEMONS FROM ATTACKING HUMANS.
WHY ARE HUMANS COMING HERE?
WHAT BUSINESS DO THEY HAVE ON OUR SIDE?

MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM NEAR THE BORDER
GALLOP
GALLOP

LISTEN UP!
WE HAVE ORDERS FROM THE COM-MANDER!
GALLOP
GALLOP
SNORT
GALLOP
SNORT
STOP!
HALT!
HALT!
RUMBLE
CLIP
CLOP
CLIP
LISTEN ...
...KNIGHTS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN!

THE IRON KINGDOM IS ONE OF THREE DELUDED APOSTATE NATIONS OF THE THREE KINGDOM TRADE ALLIANCE!
THEY HAVE FOOLISHLY TURNED THEIR BACKS ON THE SPIRITS OF LIGHT AND BECOME APOSTATES!

ONE HOUR AFTER DAWN TOMORROW...
...WE WILL STORM THE IRON KINGDOM!

CRUSH THE APOS-TATES!
CLINK
CNALG

SLASH
CRUSH THE APOS-TATES!
THIS IS A HOLY WAR, AND THE WRATH OF THE SPIRITS WILL SURELY RAIN DOWN ON THEIR HEADS!

TAKE TURNS RESTING.
WE WILL REST AND SLEEP NEAR THE FOREST.
OUR FORCES SHALL MOVE AT A SLOW MARCH FOR A WHILE.
STEP

DON'T FORGET TO MAINTAIN YOUR WEAPONS TOO.
SERVICE THE RIDERS SO THEY CAN WORK HARD TOMORROW.
SNORT

CHEER
SONS OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN, BLESSINGS OF THE SPIRITS BE UPON YOU!
CHERISH YOUR BLOODTHIRSTY BLADES AS YOU SLEEP!
HA
HA
HA
HA

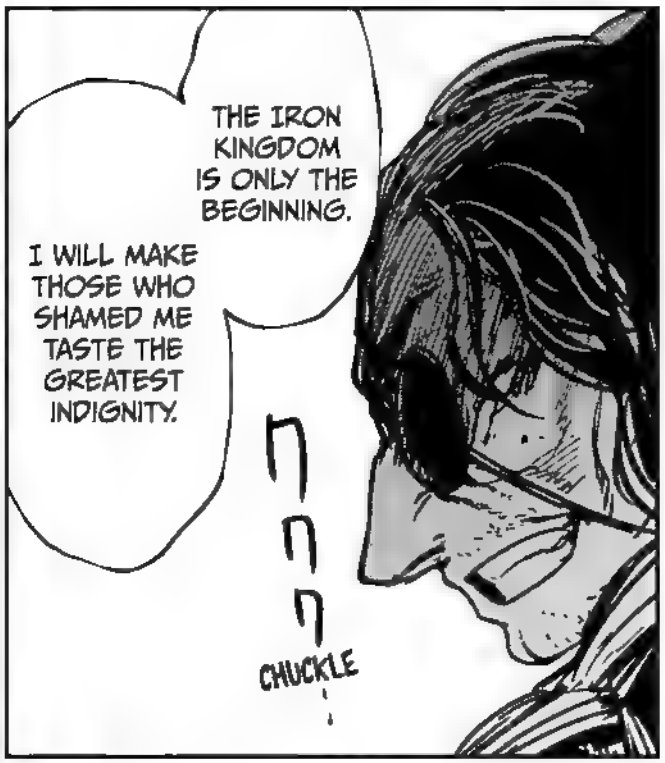
CRACKL
CRACKL

I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE, LONELY WINTER KING.
YOU TURNED YOUR BACK ON THE TEACHINGS OF THE SPIRITS.
SCRATCH

SCRATCH
SCRATCH

THEN YOU ACTED AS THOUGH YOU WERE NOT TO BLAME.
NOT EVEN THE FLAMES OF HELL CAN COMPARE.
WHEN I FINALLY ESCAPED FROM WANDERING THE HARSH SPIRIT WORLD, YOU HAD DEMONS WAITING TO AMBUSH ME.

HA
HA
HA
HA
HA

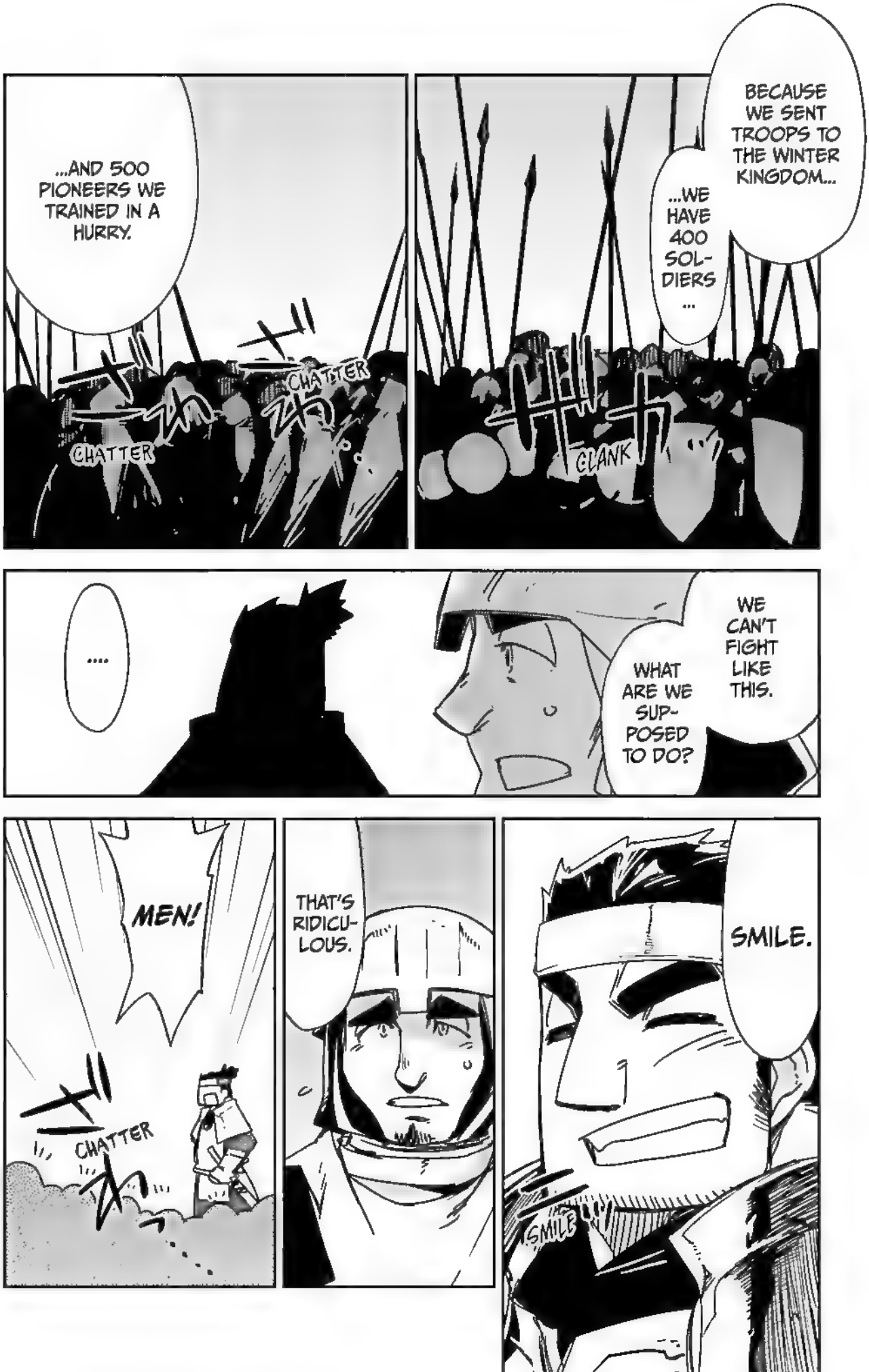

THE IRON KINGDOM IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.
I WILL MAKE THOSE WHO SHAMED ME TASTE THE GREATEST INDIGNITY.
CHUCKLE

WE'VE RE-CEIVED THE SIGNAL!
THEY...
THEY'RE HERE!
MURMUR

IRON KINGDOM BORDER FOOTHILL PLAINS

WAITING SO LONG FOR MY MOMENT TO SHINE HAS BEEN EXHAUST-ING.
I ACTUALLY FEEL RELIEVED.
THEY REALLY CAME.
IRON KINGDOM SECOND LIEUTENANT
STEP

I THOUGHT THERE WERE A LITTLE MORE.
IF THEY'RE SENDING THIS MANY NOW, THEY MUST BE HAVING TROUBLE WITH DOMESTIC SECURITY.
THEY HAVE 2,000 HIGHLY MOBILE UNITS OF MOSTLY LIGHT CAVALRY.
IT'S A MIXED OUTFIT OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM'S STANDING ARMY AND MERCENARIES.
BUT...
チラ
GLANCE
PERHAPS THEY'RE STRENGTHENING THEIR HOLD OVER THE ROYAL PALACE OR PREPARING FOR AN UPRISING OF SERFS.
IT'S LIKELY THE MIDNIGHT SUN KING WANTED TO KEEP A FEW SOLDIERS CLOSE AT HAND.


...AND 500 PIONEERS WE TRAINED IN A HURRY.
CHATTER
CHATTER
BECAUSE WE SENT TROOPS TO THE WINTER KINGDOM...
...WE HAVE 400 SOL-DIERS ...
CLANK
....
WHAT ARE WE SUP-POSED TO DO?
WE CAN'T FIGHT LIKE THIS.
MEN!
CHATTER
THAT'S RIDICU-LOUS.
SMILE.
SMILE

THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM SENT ONLY 2,000 CAVALRYMEN TO THIS KIND OF BATTLE!
THIS MEANS ONLY THE BARE MINIMUM OF SOLDIERS REMAINING WITHIN THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM!
THIS IS VERY GOOD NEWS!
WE JUST RECEIVED WORD FROM OUR SCOUTS!
ROUGHLY 2,000 CAVALRY-MEN OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN KING-DOM ARE HEADED THIS WAY!
CHATTER
IF WE WIN THIS BATTLE, YOU WILL HAVE PRO-TECTED ...
... YOUR LAND ...
... YOUR HOMES ...
... YOUR FARMS ...
...AND YOUR FAMI-LIES!
THIS IS YOUR COUNTRY!
YOUR IRRE-PLACEABLE LAND!

OUR ENEMIES ARE MANY...
...BUT WE STAND A GOOD CHANCE OF WINNING!
THERE ARE SOME AMONG YOU WHO FLED THE MIDNIGHT SUN KINGDOM...
...AND STILL HAVE RELATIVES LIVING THERE.
WE FIGHT THIS BATTLE FOR THEM!

"WHEN YOU SMILE DURING A DIFFICULT BATTLE, VICTORY IS WITHIN YOUR HANDS."
THE FEMALE KNIGHT AND THE WHITE SWORDSMAN...
MY MASTERS TAUGHT ME THIS.

EVEN IF OUR ENEMIES DOUBLE, WE MUST STARE THEM DOWN AND SMILE!

COME.
LET US EAT POTATOES AND SMILE!

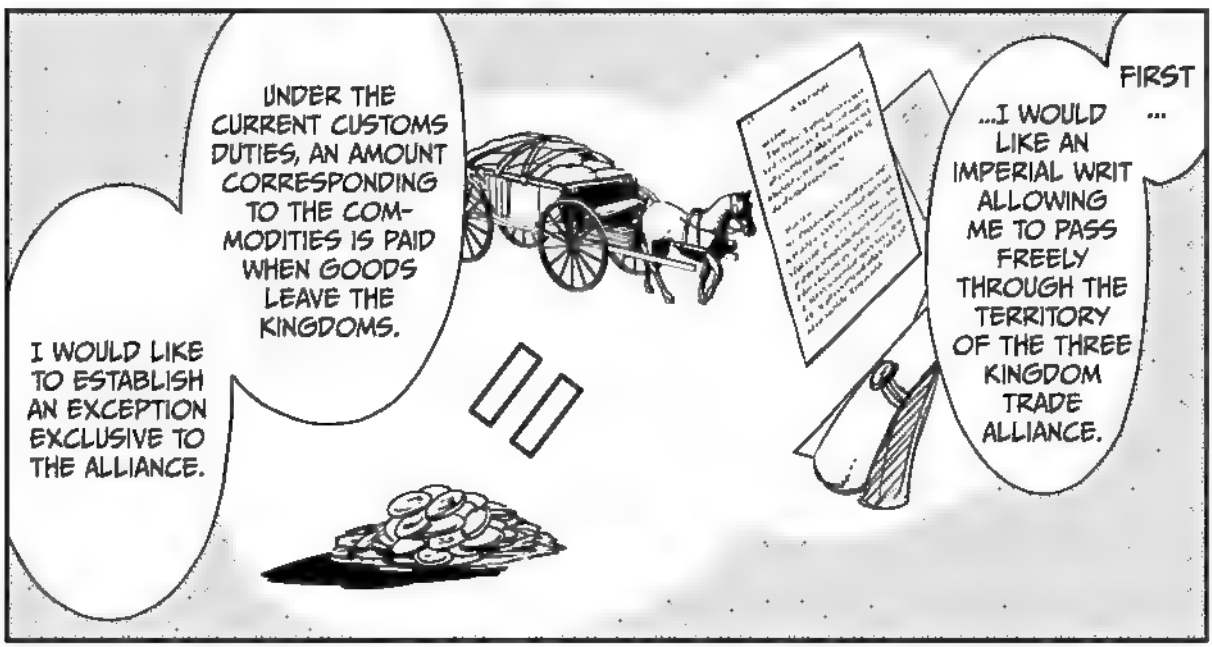
I WILL TELL YOU ONE THING!
WE WILL WIN!
おおおおおお
CHEER

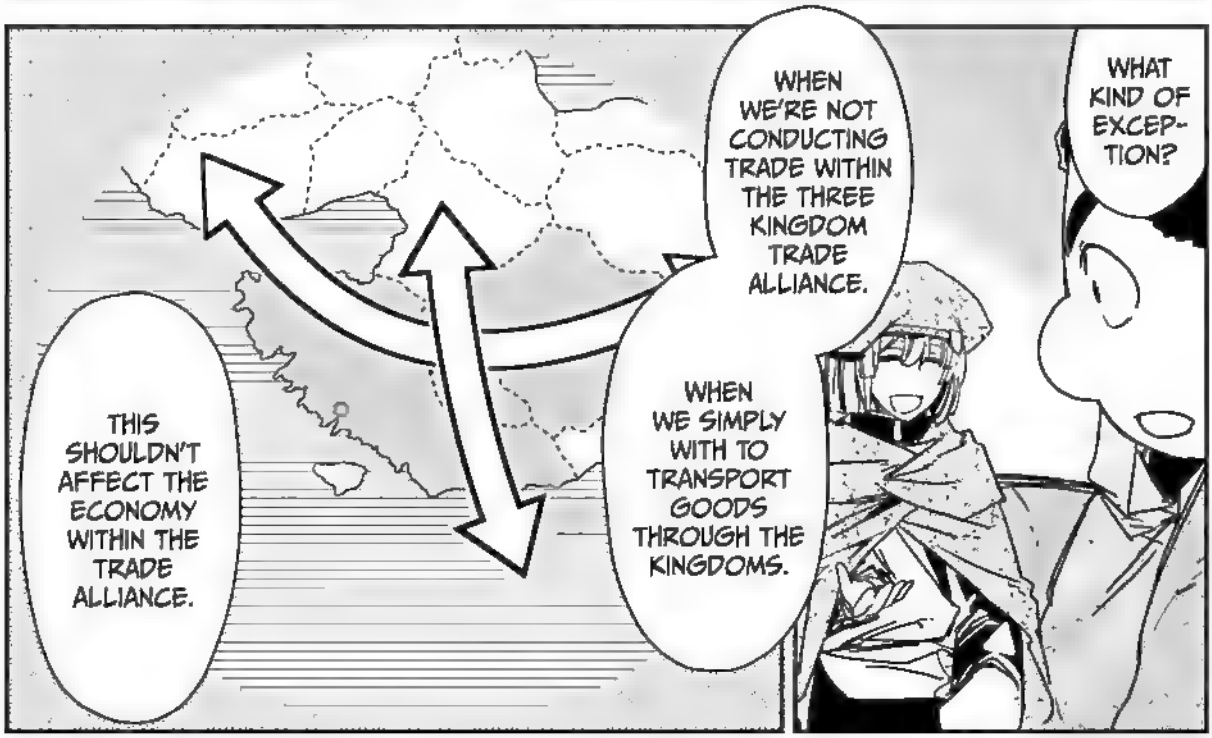
WINTER KINGDOM ROYAL PALACE BUDGET COMPILING ROOM
CHECK THE RESOURCES IN THE STOREHOUSE!
SEND A POST HORSE TO THE BORDER!
SEND A MESSENGER!
YOU'RE QUITE SPIRITED.
SLAM
WE'RE IN A FRENZY.
I'M SORRY ABOUT ALL THE NOISE.

ALLOW ME TO CONFIRM SOME-THING.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN PLAYING A GAME ON THIS TABLE, AREN'T YOU?
WHY WOULD YOU THINK THAT?
I COULD BE A PUPPET, AND THE TRUE PLAYER MAY BE HIDING BEHIND ME.
IN THESE TYPES OF SITUATIONS, THERE IS NO NEGOTIATION UNLESS THE NEGOTIATOR IS GRANTED DISCRETIONARY POWER.
YOU COULDN'T CALL THAT KIND OF PERSON A PUPPET.

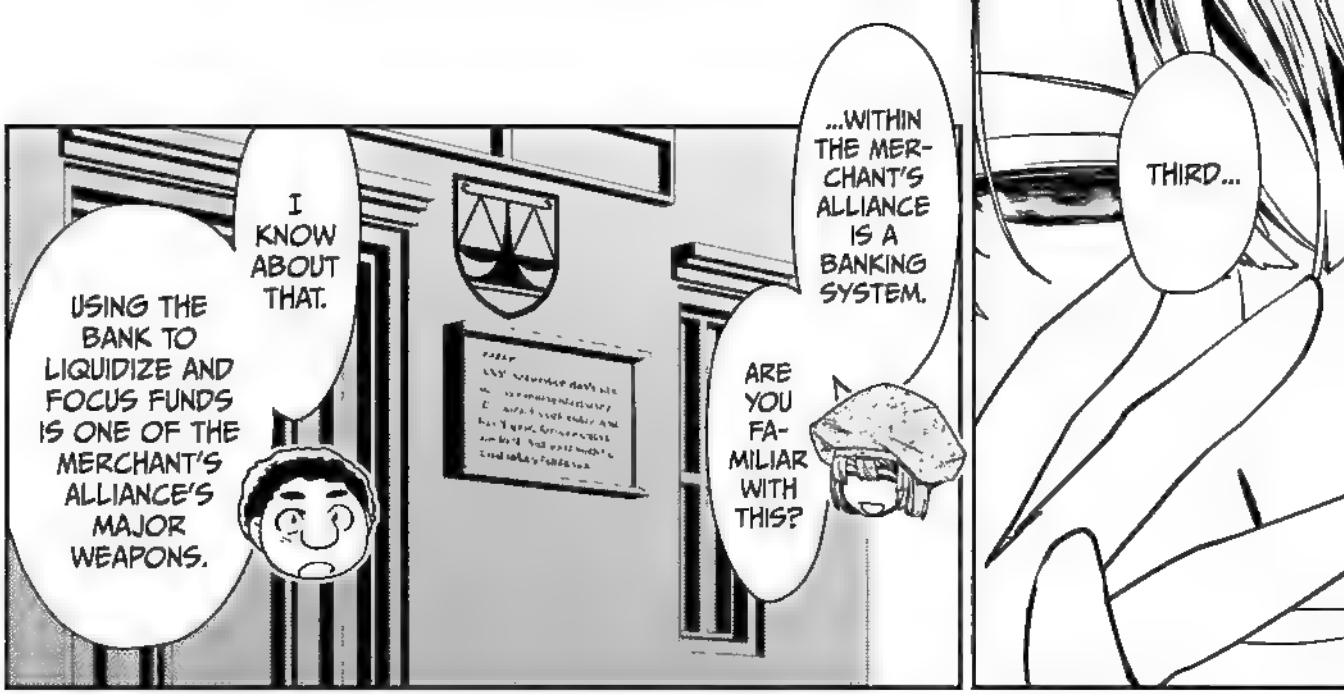
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO IMPOSED THE CUSTOMS DUTY, AREN'T YOU?
YES.
I UNDERSTAND.
BESIDES, IF IT WERE ME, I WOULD GO MYSELF.
I WOULD BE CURIOUS.
UMM
WHAT A CUTE BOY.
HAVE A SEAT.
HE'S SOMETHING OF AN APPRENTICE.
PITTER
PATTER
YES, SIR!
RIGHT.
MAKE SOME TEA.

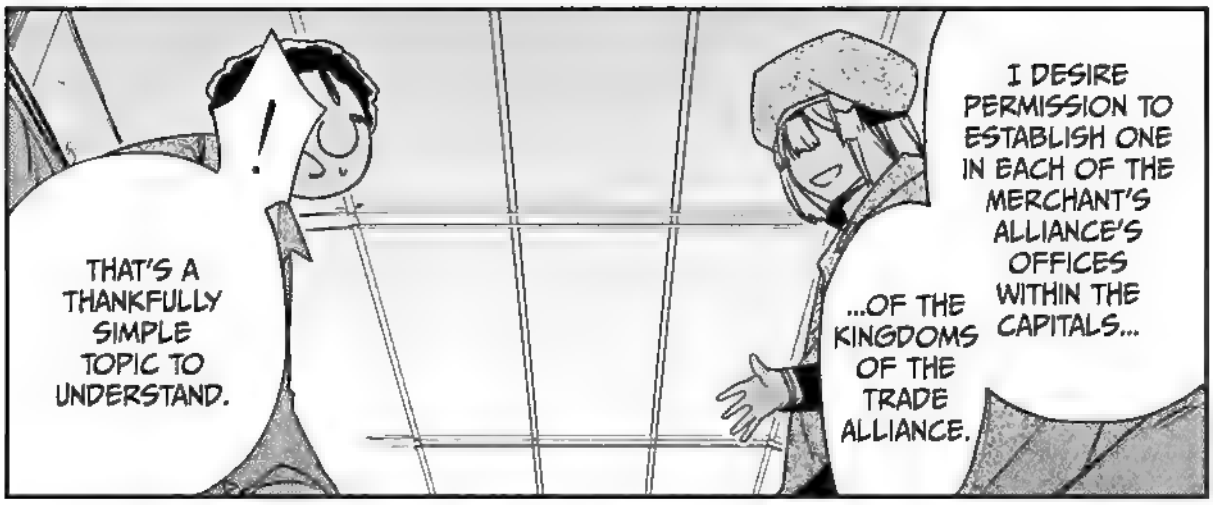
LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS.
TODAY'S NEGOTIATIONS COVER A LOT OF GROUND.
LET US OUTLINE THE TOPICS.
SLIP


FIRST ... ...I WOULD LIKE AN IMPERIAL WRIT ALLOWING ME TO PASS FREELY THROUGH THE TERRITORY OF THE THREE KINGDOM TRADE ALLIANCE.
UNDER THE CURRENT CUSTOMS DUTIES, AN AMOUNT CORRESPONDING TO THE COMMODITIES IS PAID WHEN GOODS LEAVE THE KINGDOMS.
I WOULD LIKE TO ESTABLISH AN EXCEPTION EXCLUSIVE TO THE ALLIANCE.


WHAT KIND OF EXCEPTION?
WHEN WE'RE NOT CONDUCTING TRADE WITHIN THE THREE KINGDOM TRADE ALLIANCE.
WHEN WE SIMPLY WITH TO TRANSPORT GOODS THROUGH THE KINGDOMS.
THIS SHOULDN'T AFFECT THE ECONOMY WITHIN THE TRADE ALLIANCE.

GEOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING, AURORA ISLAND IS WITHIN THE WINTER KINGDOM'S TERRITORY.
I WOULD LIKE TO LEASE THE ISLAND AS YOU WOULD A NOBLEMAN'S TERRITORY OR A MANOR.
SECOND, I WOULD LIKE TO NEGOTIATE A LEASE OF AURORA ISLAND.
YOU MAY CONSIDER THESE NEGOTIATIONS AS NEGOTIATION BY PROXY.
THOUGH IT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE IF THE MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE RENTED THE ISLAND...
...THERE IS A THIRD PARTY INVOLVED IN THIS MATTER.
AURORA ISLAND?
WHY WOULD SOMEONE LEASE THAT PLACE?

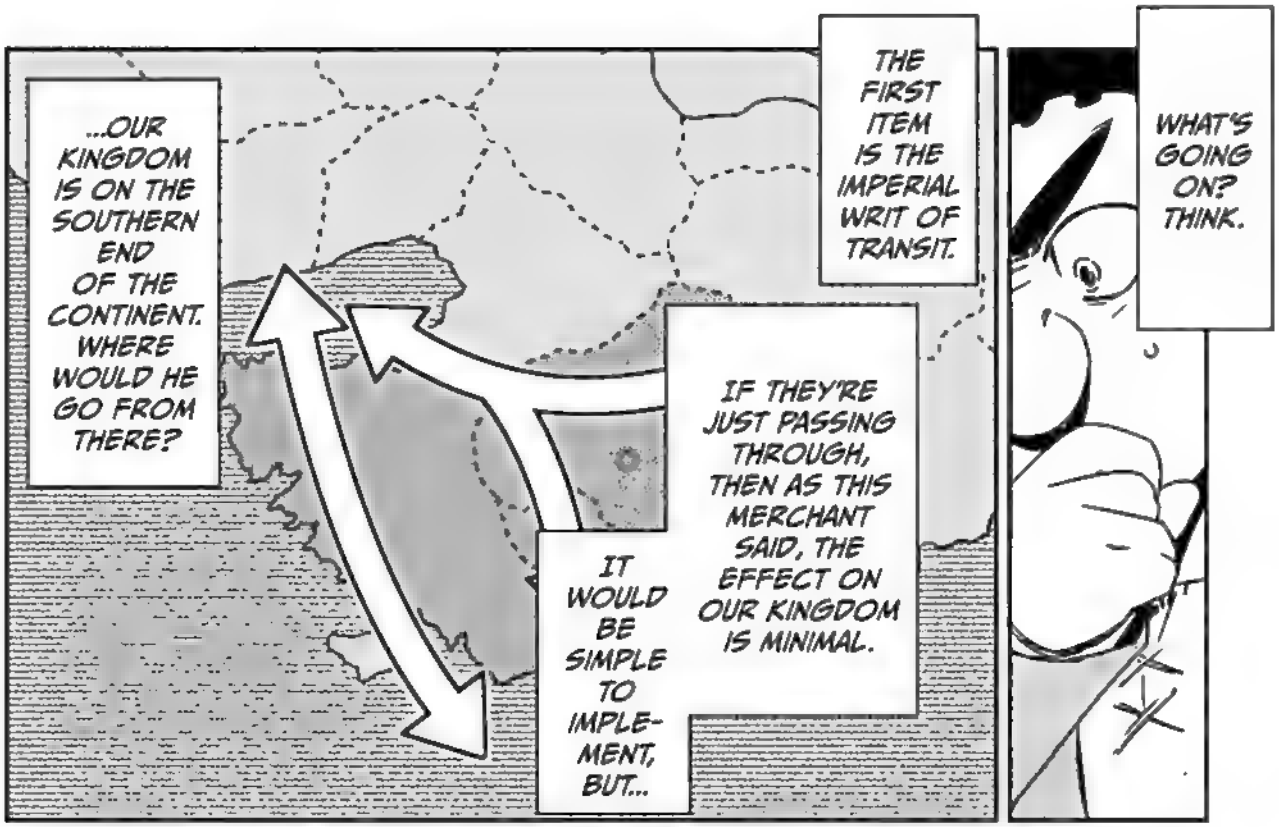

...WITHIN THE MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE IS A BANKING SYSTEM.
ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THIS?
I KNOW ABOUT THAT.
USING THE BANK TO LIQUIDIZE AND FOCUS FUNDS IS ONE OF THE MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE'S MAJOR WEAPONS.
THIRD...

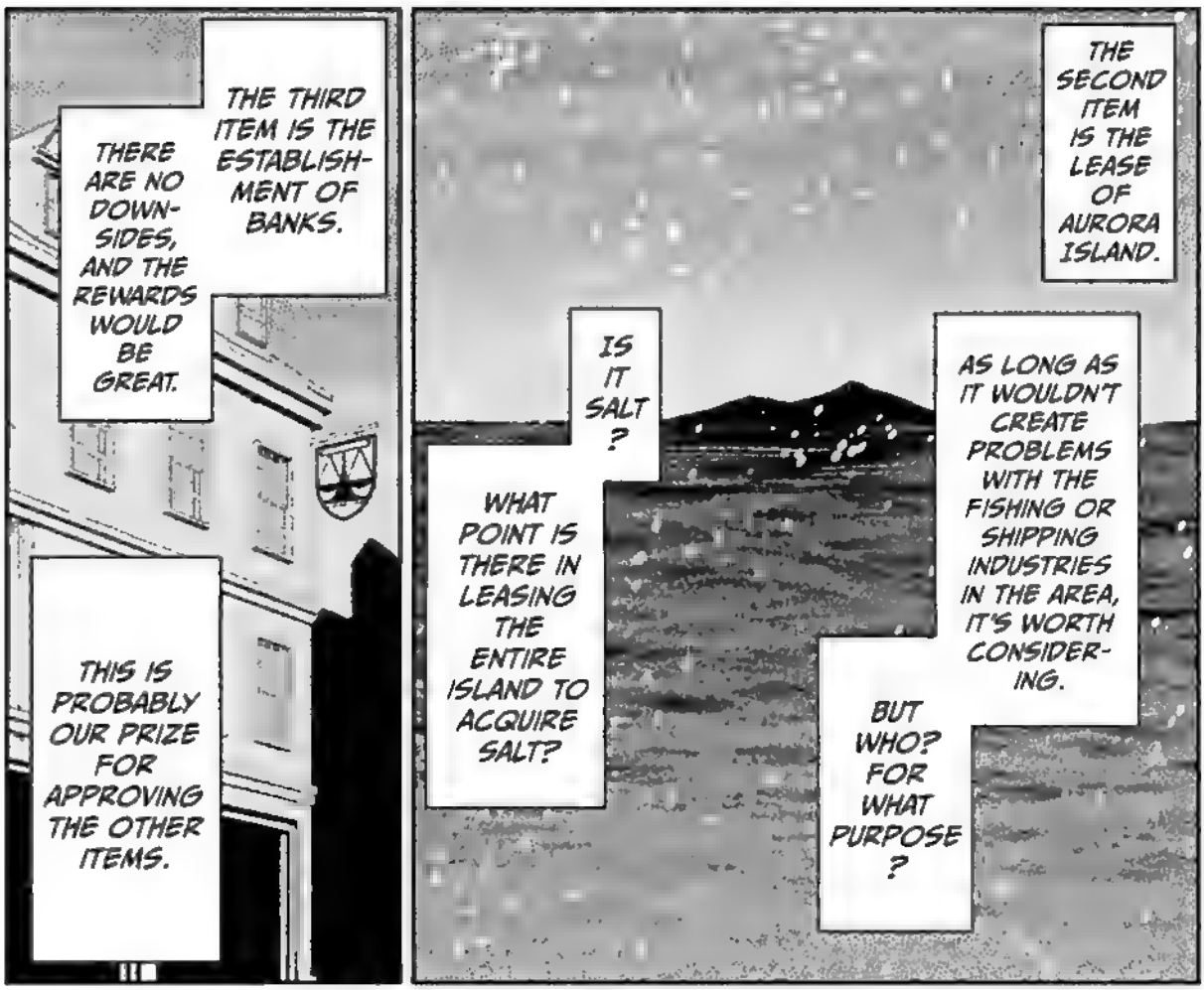

I DESIRE PERMISSION TO ESTABLISH ONE IN EACH OF THE MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE'S OFFICES WITHIN THE CAPITALS...
...OF THE KINGDOMS OF THE TRADE ALLIANCE.
!
THAT'S A THANKFULLY SIMPLE TOPIC TO UNDERSTAND.

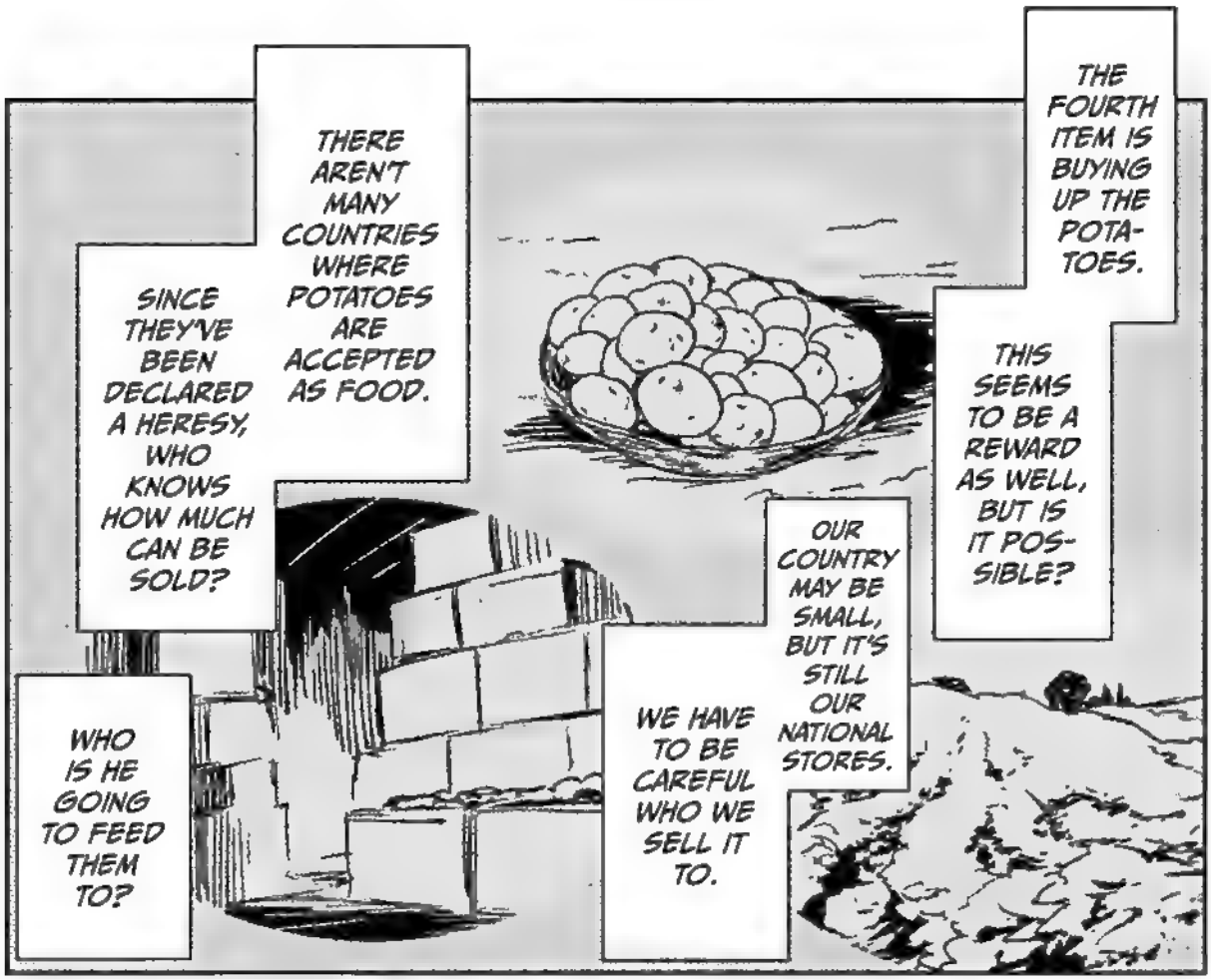
?
OUR POTATOES?

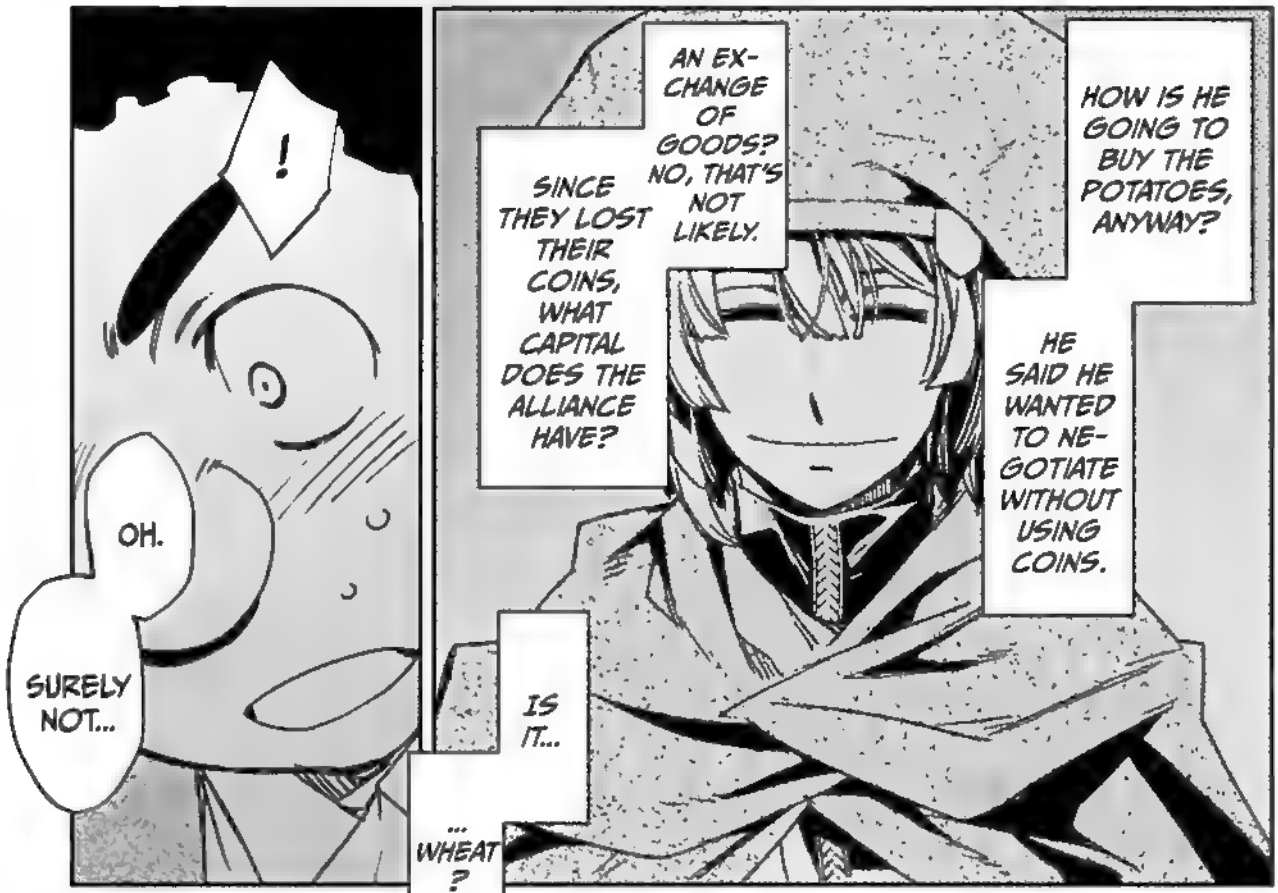
FOURTH...
...THE MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT ALL THE POTATOES THE THREE KINGDOM TRADE ALLIANCE HAS IN STORAGE.

YOU DON'T WANT TO USE COINS?
WE WOULD PREFER TO NEGOTIATE USING METHODS THAT DON'T INVOLVE COINS.
AS A SPECIAL NOTE...
...THE MERCHANT'S ALLIANCE CURRENTLY HAS HARDLY ANY COINS.
THESE ARE TODAY'S ITEMS.
I BROUGHT TEA!
カチャ!
CLINK!
THIS WARMS YOU UP, DOESN'T IT?
YOU PUT JAM IN THIS?
THANK YOU, CHILD.
HEH HEH.


WHAT'S GOING ON? THINK.
THE FIRST ITEM IS THE IMPERIAL WRIT OF TRANSIT.
..OUR KINGDOM IS ON THE SOUTHERN END OF THE CONTINENT. WHERE WOULD HE GO FROM THERE?
IF THEY'RE JUST PASSING THROUGH, THEN AS THIS MERCHANT SAID, THE EFFECT ON OUR KINGDOM IS MINIMAL.
IT WOULD BE SIMPLE TO IMPLE-MENT, BUT...

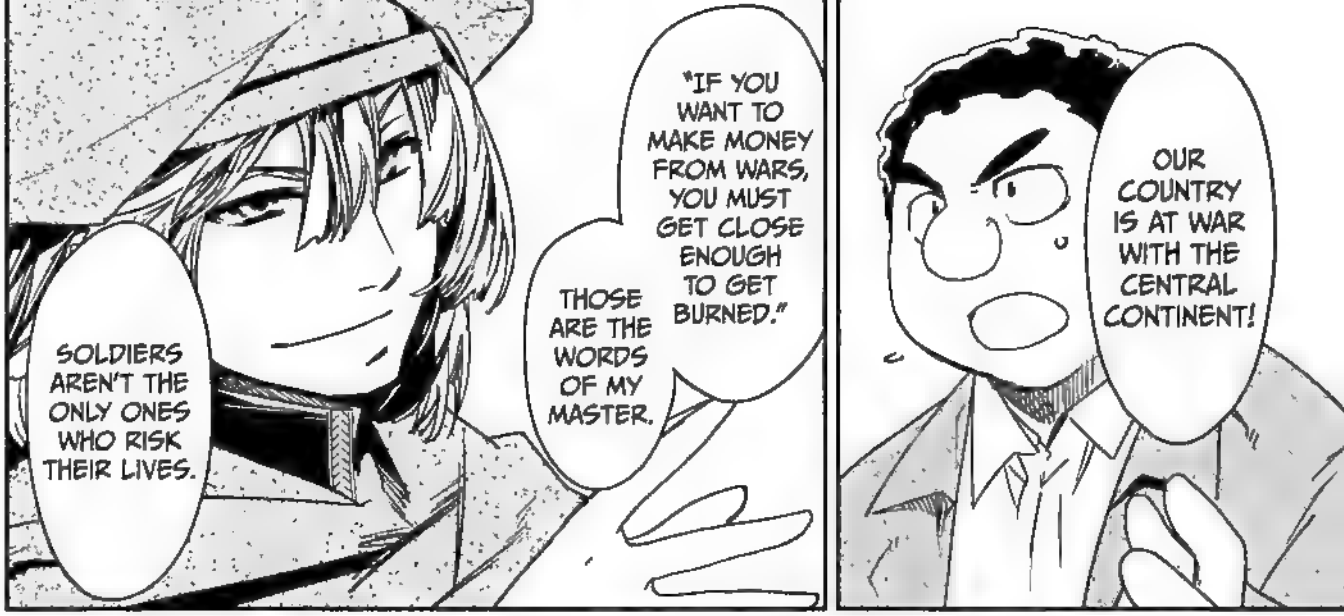

THE SECOND ITEM IS THE LEASE OF AURORA ISLAND.
AS LONG AS IT WOULDN'T CREATE PROBLEMS WITH THE FISHING OR SHIPPING INDUSTRIES IN THE AREA, IT'S WORTH CONSIDER-ING.
IS IT SALT?
WHAT POINT IS THERE IN LEASING THE ENTIRE ISLAND TO ACQUIRE SALT?
BUT WHO? FOR WHAT PURPOSE?
THE THIRD ITEM IS THE ESTABLISH-MENT OF BANKS.
THERE ARE NO DOWN-SIDES, AND THE REWARDS WOULD BE GREAT.
THIS IS PROBABLY OUR PRIZE FOR APPROVING THE OTHER ITEMS.


THE FOURTH ITEM IS BUYING UP THE POTATOES.
THERE AREN'T MANY COUNTRIES WHERE POTATOES ARE ACCEPTED AS FOOD.
THIS SEEMS TO BE A REWARD AS WELL, BUT IS IT POSSIBLE?
SINCE THEY'VE BEEN DECLARED A HERESY, WHO KNOWS HOW MUCH CAN BE SOLD?
OUR COUNTRY MAY BE SMALL, BUT IT'S STILL OUR NATIONAL STORES.
WHO IS HE GOING TO FEED THEM TO?
WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL WHO WE SELL IT TO.


!
OH.
SURELY NOT...
AN EXCHANGE OF GOODS? NO, THAT'S NOT LIKELY.
SINCE THEY LOST THEIR COINS, WHAT CAPITAL DOES THE ALLIANCE HAVE?
HOW IS HE GOING TO BUY THE POTATOES, ANYWAY?
HE SAID HE WANTED TO NEGOTIATE WITHOUT USING COINS.
IS IT...
... WHEAT?

YES.
YOU WANT TO BUY UP OUR POTATOES WITH WHEAT!
YOU WANT TO USE WHEAT AS A PSEUDO CURRENCY!
YOU WANT TO INVEST...
...THAT WHEAT IN THE THREE KINGDOM TRADE ALLIANCE?
QUITE SO.
YOUR... YOUR INTENTION IS...
MY INTEN-TION IS?

...THE ESTABLISH-MENT OF A TWO MAJOR CURRENCY SYSTEM.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
THAT'S CORRECT.
THE CENTRAL CONTINENT'S GROWTH POTENTIAL IS WEAKENING.
I BELIEVE INVESTING IN REGIONS WITH PROMISING EMERGING MARKETS...
...IS THE APPRO-PRIATE CHOICE.


SOLDIERS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES WHO RISK THEIR LIVES.
THOSE ARE THE WORDS OF MY MASTER.
"IF YOU WANT TO MAKE MONEY FROM WARS, YOU MUST GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO GET BURNED."
OUR COUNTRY IS AT WAR WITH THE CENTRAL CONTINENT!

!
THAT SHOULD GO WITHOUT SAYING.
WHAT GUARANTEE IS THERE OF THAT KIND OF GROWTH?

WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO DO THAT?
YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN DO THAT?

YOU INTEND TO PASS THROUGH OUR KINGDOM'S TERRITORIAL WATERS...
..AND BEGIN TRADING WITH THE DEMONS!

BECAUSE I AM A MERCHANT.

WHY WOULD YOU...

YES.
THAT'S EX-ACTLY RIGHT.

ARE THERE ONLY ENEMIES AND ALLIES IN THIS WORLD?
IS THERE ONLY BLACK AND WHITE?
THOUGH THEY MAY BE DEMONS, "THE BALANCE OF PROFITS AND LOSSES IS OUR COMMON LANGUAGE."
THAT IS WHAT I BELIEVE.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, WHY DOES HE WORK SO HARD?
WHAT IS SHE DREAMING OF?
RUSTLE
I WOULD LIKE TO IMPLORE YOU AS WELL.

CURRENTLY THE ONLY CITY IN THE SPIRIT WORLD WHERE HUMANS AND DEMONS COEXIST IS GATEWAY CITY.
AS A REPRESEN-TATIVE OF THE CITY'S AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENT, I BEG OF YOU.
I WOULD LIKE YOU TO LEND ME THAT ISLAND.
WE NEED SALT.

EXCUSE ME.
ARE THOSE HORNS?
YES, CHILD.
I AM PROUD OF MY ROSE-COLORED HORNS.

CAN I TOUCH THEM?
OF COURSE.
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
YA
AAR
GH!

WIDE RANGE THUN-DER-BOLT!
BOOM
CRYS-TAL-LIZED MAGIC!
SUPER WIDE RANGE THUN-DER-BOLT, ANNIHI-LATE!
CRASH
RUMBLE
THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO DESTROY THE GATE.
MORE, MORE.
ARGH!
FINE!
RUMBLE

KABOOM

MAXI-MUM

THUN-DER-BOLT

CRACKLE

BUZZ

BUZZ

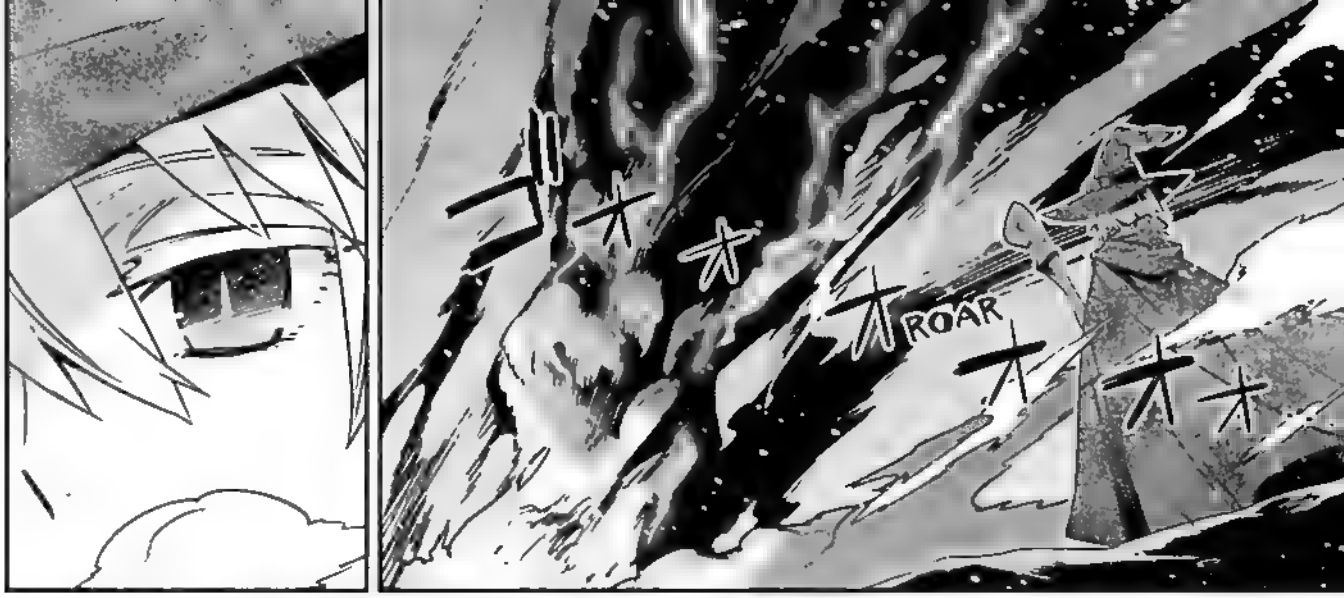
BUZZ

...ANNI-HILA-TION!

FLASH

MAXI-
MUM
—
—THUN-
DER-
BOLT
—
CRACKLE
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
—ANNI-
HILA-
TION!
FLASH!!

KABOOM


ゴオオオオ
ROAR
オオオ

YOU'RE BETTER AT CASTING WIDE RANGE SPELLS...
...BUT I'M BETTER AT CONCENTRATING A BUNCH OF SPELLS IN A SMALL SPACE.

GOT IT!
ENTER THE DUST CLOUD USING FLYING MAGIC.
WIDE AREA OF DESTRUCTION CONFIRMED.

HOW'S THAT?

WHOOSH

WHOOSH

WHOOSH

THERE'S A LIGHT AT THE END...
ROAR
WHAT'S THAT?
!

FLASH

WHAT IS THIS WIND?
WHERE DID I COME OUT?
WHOOSH
FWISH
THAT WAS CLOSE!
WHEN DID I START FLYING TOWARD THE GROUND?
WHOOSH
!?
FALL
WHERE IS THIS...
HUH?

A SUBTERRANEAN WORLD.

A SUBTERRANEAN WORLD ILLUMINATED BY A REPULSIVE PHOTOSPHERE.

A GREEN SUN.

WHOOSH

AM I IN THE SPIRIT WORLD?

A GREEN SUN.
WHOOSH
AM I IN THE SPIRIT WORLD?

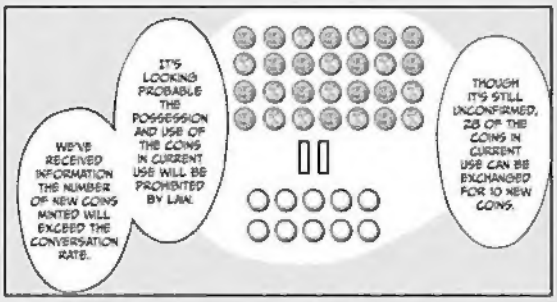
A SUBTER-RANEAN WORLD.
A SUBTERRANEAN WORLD ILLUMINATED BY A REPULSIVE PHOTOSPHERE.

THE END

CHAPTER 19
Because I am a Merchant

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CURRENCY and its GUARANTEE OF "VALUE"

Currency, which is used to express the value of objects, is vital to trading. Let's follow the events leading up to the birth of money and its associated system.


WE'VE RECEIVED INFORMATION THE NUMBER OF NEW COINS MINTED WILL EXCEED THE CONVERSATION RATE.
IT'S LOOKING PROBABLE THE POSSESSION AND USE OF THE COINS IN CURRENT USE WILL BE PROHIBITED BY LAW.
THOUGH IT'S STILL UNCONFIRMED, 2B OF THE COINS IN CURRENT USE CAN BE EXCHANGED FOR 10 NEW COINS.

The coins used is in the Holy Kingdom are a type of fiduciary money, and its value is guaranteed by faith in the government.

METAL COINS: BORN TO IMPROVE THE CONVENIENCE OF TRADES

Before there was currency, trades were conducted through the exchange of goods. However, the value of the goods brought to the table by both sides had to be equal, and when there was too great of a difference between the value of the goods, a deal could not be reached. Currency was born to make up the difference in these types of exchanges.

The first forms of currency were shells or stones used in religious or magic rituals, grains, livestock, and cloth. However, among other drawbacks, the shells and stones themselves had no value, and things like livestock were difficult to transport. People began using gold dust and lumps of metal as currency, and the even more convenient coin, such as gold or silver coins, appeared.

Just as Japan's 10 yen coin has the number "10" inscribed on it, the value of a coin was written on its surface. The shape and metal content of coins of similar value were standardized, and trades could be conducted simply by counting the number of coins.

THE VALUE OF COINS BUILT ON TRUST

The currencies currently in use throughout the world are called "fiduciary currencies." For example, a 10,000 yen note is assumed to be worth 10,000 yen, but the note itself is nothing more than a piece of printed paper. Fiduciary currency is worth its face value because governments and central banks use policies to establish the currency's value, and its value is guaranteed by law.

In the past when these institutions were not stable, the value of currency tended to be unstable as well. In some cases, noble metals such as gold and silver were used to create coins and give them value. However, only a few currencies used precious metals, and in the majority of cases, the metals used to create a coin were not worth its face value. Practically speaking, they were very similar to fiduciary currency. Because of this, when governments became unstable, the common folk despised using currencies whose value may change, and in some cases, they would exchange goods instead. As the Young Merchant explains in chapter 18, the value of the currency used in *Maoyu* is guaranteed by the Holy Kingdom and functions similarly to a fiduciary currency. Based on the Young Merchant's words, we can assume the faith in the Holy Kingdom is wavering.

Perhaps the Young Merchant believes faith in the Holy Kingdom and church does not exist.

MAOYU : Archenemy and Hero
"Become mine, Hero" "I refuse!"
Volume 5

KADOKAWA MANGA

Art by
Akira Ishida

Original Work by
Mamare Touno

Character Design by
Keinojou Mizutama and toi8

MAOYU MAOU YUUSHA
"KONO WARENO MONOTONARE, YUUSHAYO" "KOTOWARU!"

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KADOKAWA CORPORATION
2-13-3 Fujimi Chiyoda-ku Tokyo, 102-8177 JAPAN

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